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The Impact of Peer Groups upon Student Subcultures: An Exploratory Study.

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THE IMPACT OF PEER GROUPS UPON STUDENT SUBCULTURES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by

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". . . the first wisdom of sociology is . . . things are not what they seem."

Peter Berger

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Value of Student Subculture Studies

Since Willard Waller first presented the study "The Rating and Dating Complex" to the social science world in 1937, there has been an increasing interest in the study of college student life. Many social scientists have presented their work on this subject to the academic world. Among them are such studies as Becker et al. Boys In White (1961), Becker et al. Making the Grade (1968), Bushnell's "Student Culture at Vassar" (1962), Davie and Hare's "Button-Down Culture" (1956), Clark and Trow's "Determinants of the Sub-culture of College Students" (1966), and Hartshorne's "Undergraduate Society and the College" (1945). Each approaches subculture from a slightly different perspective, but each has one thing in common with all others: the desire to present an objective study of college life.

The perspective of these studies vary with the individual investigator, his interest, and methodology. It appears that there are as many reasons for studying college life as there are investigators. There is one general reason why social scientists study student subculture: By studying subcultures within a society one presumably can better understand the culture of that society. Such studies enable one to identify and recognize the different elements of the general culture of a society.

Statement of Problem

The problem undertaken in this study is to determine whether it is possible to discover any differences in attitudes held by resident

college students and non-resident college students as a consequence of the reference groups with which these two categories of student identify. In other words, this study posits the question whether there are any attitudinal differences between resident and non-resident students correlated with their place of residence.

A resident college student is a student who resides on a university campus, while a non-resident college student is one who lives somewhere other than on a university campus. In this study the term resident student refers to a woman student who resides in one of Creighton University's three dormitories for women. In contrast, the term non-resident student refers to a woman student who lives with her parents.

Originally it was the researcher's contention that when a woman student attends an institution of higher education while living at home with her parents that her family would be more apt to have a stronger influence over her than if she lived in a dormitory. However, the focus of the thesis was shifted for two reasons: First, there was the problem of measuring or observing the attitudes of the parents of the women observed. Second, there was the problem of measuring the impact or influence of the parents' attitudes upon the attitudes of their daughters.

Therefore, this study is not concerned with the amount of parental influence that can be exerted upon women students as a result of their place of residence. Instead, the study is concerned with whether there are any attitudinal differences between resident and non-resident students associated with their place of residence. The researcher will thus be concerned with attitudes that students have that can be observed or perceived by the observer. For instance, do the two categories of

student differ in their degree and intensity of educational commitment?

This thesis is not solely concerned with the possibility of discovering attitudinal differences between resident and non-resident students. It also deals with the impact of peer groups upon the emergence of student subcultures, since it will examine the presumption that student subcultures emerge on college campuses as a collective response by students to the college environment. Finally, this study will focus attention on the impact of various peer groups on the emergence of student subcultures.

Reasons for University Selection

In selecting Creighton University for the study the writer was influenced by several factors. The first was a personal and earlier acquaintance with the University. The writer attended Creighton University from June, 1966, to May, 1970. This familiarity with the campus environment aided in the establishment of rapport. At the same time the writer feels that she is far enough removed--not having been regularly on campus for two years--to be objective in the research of the subject.

Another reason for choosing Creighton University as the site for the study was that it has both residential and non-residential students. This was the most important factor influencing the writer's selection, since the main concern of this study is uncovering attitudinal differences between the two categories of students--resident and non-resident.

A third factor which influenced the selection of the university was economy in relation to time and money. Creighton University is located within the same city as the University of Nebraska at Omaha, which

permitted interviewing and field work to begin during the second year of graduate work.

Identifying the Social Setting

This study deals with two categories of women students in the College of Arts and Science at Creighton University: those who reside in dormitories and those who live at home. It is limited to women students because of the observer's inability adequately to observe and participate in the activities of men. The study is also limited to those enrolled in the College of Arts and Science because professional and vocational students tend to see things from different perspectives than do non-professional undergraduate students. For example, the professional student perhaps tends to be more committed to education than the typical undergraduate. Also, undergraduate students are unlikely to have extensive associations with professional or vocational students.

The peer group is one of many possible reference groups a student encounters during college years. There are several other groups who may influence, at least indirectly, the two categories of women student--resident and non-resident. These other groups are faculty, administrators, parents and siblings. The administrators can influence students as a result of the policies they make. For example, when the Board of Directors of the University announced raises in tuition, both in 1972 and in 1973, it aroused negative responses from the general student body and the Student Board of Governors.

The faculty has the potential to influence students both inside and outside the classroom. The faculty can influence students in the classroom by what they teach and how they teach and how formal or informal

their classes are. Outside the classroom situation, the faculty can influence the students through informal contacts such as "rap sessions." By "rap session" is meant a discussion, not necessarily of an academic nature, between the faculty and students which is conducted outside the confines of a formal classroom. By expressing views on topics of importance to students, the faculty can potentially influence students during such discussions.

It was observed that most of the rap sessions occurred in the student union over a cup of coffee. Occasionally, they took place in the halls between classes. Only rarely did such an informal session take place in the faculty member's office.

Parents and siblings are two sources of influence from outside the university setting. Parents are among the major significant others an individual encounters in a life time. Parents are the first significant others and two of the most, if not the most, permanent that an individual encounters until adulthood. Even in their absence, parents may exert influence over their children. A college student may experience conflict between the values exposed to at college and the values condoned by parents (Benedict, 1938; Davis, 1940; Eisenstadt, 1956; Jacob, 1957; Parsons and Platt, 1970). Other siblings in the family as well as the individual's birth order have an impact upon the individual. (Carter, 1937; Forer, 1969; Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg, 1970; and Stotland et al., 1971).

Theoretical and Practical Objectives

This study contributes knowledge to three areas of social science, viz., sociology of education, complex organizations, and social psychology. It draws on the area of sociology of education, because it concerns an educational setting and its focus is on college students. The study contributes to the area of sociology of education in several ways. First, this study will enhance our knowledge of the degree to which various categories of students are committed to education. The commitment of students on a particular campus to education has certain implications for both faculty and administrators, particularly the faculty. Second, the study will augment our understanding of the ways in which reference groups influence attitudes held by college students. Finally, it will contribute to the area of sociology of education by raising the question of how the influence of the peer group upon students affects the educational process.

Since the educational system, specifically higher education, is one of the more important institutions of our advanced society, the study also contributes to the area of complex organizations. First, it will aid us in understanding how the students view the faculty and higher education. Second, it will examine the way in which students perceive the goals of the university.

This study draws on the area of social psychology in three ways: First, it sees the individual in the context of the group (Homans, 1950; Hare et al., 1962; Shaw, 1967). Second, it deals with attitude differences among college students (Jacob, 1957; Goldsen, 1960; Brookover et al., 1965). Third, its theoretical orientation is that of the

reference group. (Merton and Kitt, 1950; Merton, 1962; Hyman and Singer, 1968). The study will contribute to the area of social psychology by indicating the extent to which the peer group influences college students.

Relevant Theories

There are two general types of theory which are relevant to this study: reference group theory and subculture theory. These two theoretical approaches will be discussed in detail in Chapter V and VI, respectively.

Dimensions of the Study

There are two main questions to which this study addresses itself. First, the study is concerned with the situations in which the peer group, in contrast to other groups, functions as a frame of reference for college students. Second, this study is concerned with whether there are any attitudinal differences between resident and non-resident students at Creighton University. This general question raises several other questions.

1. Are resident students more or less committed to education than non-resident students?

2. How do the two categories of student deal with the college environment? Do they develop the same or similar attitudes and behavior toward the college environment, or do they develop different attitudes and behavior?

Research Procedures

Methods, Procedures and Techniques

The study was conducted in two phases. The first phase was conducted in the spring of 1972, while the second phase was conducted in the spring of 1973. The study is an exploratory one which uses the techniques of participant observation plus formal interviewing. An open-ended interview schedule, developed from observational data, was administered at the end of the first phase of field work. Portions of the research made use of documentary sources such as the Creighton University Bulletin.

Informants

During the first phase of the study, twelve women freshmen in the College of Arts and Science were observed. Seven of the coeds were non-resident students and five were resident students.

Fifteen women freshmen and sophomores in the College of Arts and Science were observed in the second phase. Only eight of the fifteen had been observed in the first phase. This is partly because four of the original twelve students, two from each category, did not return to Creighton University for the 1973 spring semester.

Organization of the Study

After the data were collected and organized in chronological order, they were organized around the questions which guided the collection of data as set forth previously on page 7.

Chapter I of this thesis introduces the problems, the procedures of the study, and the contributions to the study of sociology. Chapter II

is a review of the relevant literature which places the study in its theoretical and methodological context within social science. Chapter III discusses in detail the methodology employed. Chapter IV describes the college environment. Chapter V deals with the functions and dysfunctions of reference groups, specifically, peer groups for college students, and the consequences of the peer group upon student life. Chapter VI is concerned with student subcultures, particularly with the elements in the university environment that contribute to the student subcultures present on Creighton's campus. Chapter VII summarizes the findings and conclusions of the study and suggests implications for further research.

The present chapter has provided the reader with an overview of what is forthcoming in the following chapters. A statement of the problem studied has been made. It was noted that this study is concerned with two interrelated phenomena: the possibility of discovering any attitudinal differences between resident and non-resident students, and the impact of peer groups upon the emergence of student subcultures. The reasons for selecting Creighton University for the study were mentioned. The social context in which the study occurred was discussed in detail. The theoretical and practical objectives of the study were made explicit. The dimensions of the study were noted and thereby specifying the questions to which the study directs itself. Finally, the research procedures employed were briefly mentioned.

While the present chapter provides an overview of what is forthcoming in the following chapter, Chapter II focuses solely on pertinent literature. It reviews in detail the relevant peer group and subculture

literature, and thus places this study in the theoretical and methodological context.

CHAPTER II

RELEVANT LITERATURE

In this chapter, three types of literature concerned with reference groups and subcultures will be reviewed: theoretical, substantive and methodological. The theoretical literature will be discussed first. The focus in this section will be on reference group and subculture theories.

Theoretical Literature

Because Robert K. Merton (1962) has contributed much to the development of reference group theory, it is appropriate to begin with him. He has illustrated how certain terms, such as relative deprivation, are derived from the primitive term reference group.[1] Merton has also attempted to point out the explanatory elements of reference group theory. For instance, he suggests that the concept of relative deprivation, which he sees as an element in reference group theory, can account for the perceived disparity between how an individual defines a situation and how one would expect him to define the situation (Merton, 1962:234-235). He thus sees reference group theory as more than a conceptual scheme.

Merton (1962) notes that there are two major types of reference group. The first is the " 'normative type' which sets and maintains standards for individuals" (Merton, 1962:283). The "normative type of

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[1] A primitive term is one from which other terms are derived.

reference group serves as a source of values for the individual, who may or may not be a member of that group" (Merton, 1962:284). The second type of reference group is the " 'comparative type' which provides a frame of comparison relative to which the individual evaluates himself and others" (Merton, 1962:283). The "comparative type" is the type an individual uses for evaluating his relative position and the position of others. The individual's perception of his relative position is dependent in part on the situation as well as the group which is functioning at the moment as a comparative group (Merton, 1962:283-284). It is important to note that any group may serve either one of these two functions--normative or comparative--for any individual.[1]

Merton further notes that the "term 'reference group' is something of a misnomer" (Merton, 1962:284), since the term is applied to individuals as well as to groups. In order to distinguish between reference groups and reference individuals or significant others, Merton cites the following criteria of a membership group: frequency of interaction, consciousness of membership and definition or recognition by others.

In conclusion, Merton notes two things about reference groups. First, group boundaries are not necessarily fixed. Group boundaries respond to the specific content of the situation:

> A changed situation may bring about significant changes in the rate of social interaction so that one-time members objectively leave the group, even though they do not explicitly 'resign' or 'drop out' (Merton, 1962:286).

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[1] Kelly (1952:413) observes that "the distinction between the two main functions . . . is important because it makes explicit the two main aspects of reference group theory; the motivational and the perceptual."

The fact that group boundaries respond to the situational content is important. The unfixed boundaries of groups make it difficult for sociologists to define and observe groups. Secondly, Merton observes that there appears to be varying degrees of group membership (Merton, 1962:286-287). Thus, some individuals have a more central position in the group, while others are more marginal.

The individual's position in the group is dependent on the frequency of interaction with other members of the group. In other words, if an individual frequently interacts with other members of the group, that individual is more apt to have a central position in the group. However, if an individual does not frequently engage in interaction with members of a group, the member is less apt to have a central position and more apt to be a marginal member.

In this study, the investigator was concerned with the central and marginal members of the two categories of informant. For instance, the non-resident informant whose opinions were most highly valued by the other non-resident informants was Martha while Jan's opinions were the least valued. Of the resident informants, Dede's opinions were the most highly valued while Liz's were the least. Jan's and Liz's opinions were not highly regarded, because they were marginal members of their respective groups. Also, Jan and Liz were the individuals who deviated most from the norms of their respective groups.

In their article "Reference Group Theory and Social Mobility," Merton and Kitt (1950:87) discuss two interrelated questions: "what are the consequences, functional and dysfunctional, of positive orientations to the values of a group other than one's own?" and "which social

processes initiate, sustain or curb such orientations?"

In discussing the first question, Merton and Kitt note that the individual can acquire two positive advantages from adopting the values of an outgroup, that is, a group to which the individual does not belong. First, adopting the outgroup's values may aid the individual's rise into that group. Second, it eases the individual's adjustment after he has become a member of the group (Merton and Kitt, 1950:87). Merton and Kitt refer to the individual's adopting the values of a group prior to membership as anticipatory socialization (Merton and Kitt, 1950:87). The concept of anticipatory socialization is important to this study because it may explain why, as well as when, college students take an outgroup as a frame of reference for self-evaluation and attitude-formation. For instance, it was observed that after declaring their majors, the two categories of student--resident and non-resident--began to undergo a certain amount of anticipatory socialization, [illegible] engaged in rap sessions with instructors, and showed more interest in their instructor's opinions and attitudes with regard to his field.

According to Merton and Kitt, whether the individual's adopting the values of an outgroup has functional or dysfunctional consequences for the individual is dependent upon the character of the social structure. If the social structure is a very open one, anticipatory socialization will have functional consequences for the individual (Merton and Kitt, 1950:88). If, however, the social structure is a relatively closed one, the results of anticipatory socialization will be dysfunctional for the individual (Merton and Kitt, 1950:88). The social structure of a university, such as Creighton University, is a relatively open one, and

therefore, anticipatory socialization will have functional consequences for students. It is important to note that even when anticipatory socialization serves a positive function for the individual, it also is dysfunctional for the solidarity of the group to which the individual belongs (Merton and Kitt, 1950:89).

In discussing the social processes which sustain or curb positive orientations to nonmembership groups, Merton and Kitt observe that the threat of being alienated from one's own group is perhaps the most effective curbing process. The three curbing processes most frequently employed by the informants of this study were ridicule, shunning and ostracism. When an individual, however, does adopt the values of a nonmembership group, the "social relations between the individual and the rest of the group deteriorate," (Merton and Kitt 1950:93) and the norms of the membership "become less binding" for the individual until he finally leaves the group. This is what happened when Dede, a nonresident student, moved into one of the dormitories toward the end of her freshmen year. Specifically, the norms of the non-resident students became less binding for Dede as she attempted to adopt the norms of resident students who were a nonmembership group at the time.

In the foregoing paragraphs, the concept reference groups has been discussed. The concept peer group is closely akin to that of reference group when one's peer group functions as a reference group. A peer group is one of several possible membership groups for an individual.

Theodore Newcomb (1962) delineated three general factors that contribute to peer group formation, since individuals do not associate with equal frequency or equal intensity with all their peers. The three

factors are pre-college acquaintance, propinquity, and similarity of attitudes and interests. In this study the investigator found that, even though the informants frequently were brought together by pre-college acquaintance and/or propinquity, continued interaction was dependent upon continued similarity of attitudes and interests.

In the preceding paragraphs, the basic elements of reference group theory have been discussed. The major types of reference groups--normative and comparative--were noted. Further, it was noted that group boundaries tend to be fluid, and that there are varying degrees of group membership. Also, the functional consequences of a positive orientation to nonmembership groups and the social processes that initiate, sustain or curb such orientations were discussed. Finally, the relationship between reference groups and peer groups was mentioned.

Having discussed reference group theory in some detail, the discussion will now focus on subculture theory. Numerous studies have dealt with the concept of subculture. Yinger, (1960:625) notes that the recent proliferation of studies employing the concept subculture has resulted in the term being inadequately defined.

In order to clarify what is meant by the term subculture, Yinger introduces the term contraculture to refer to the "norms that arise specifically from a frustrating situation or from conflict between a group and the larger society" (Yinger, 1960:627). Yinger, thus, limits the usage of the term subculture. A subculture, according to Yinger, is "the normative system of groups smaller than a society" (Yinger, 1960: 626).

With this definition in mind, it is important to distinguish the

concept subculture from the concept culture. The clearest distinction between these two concepts has been made by Clyde Kluckhohn. Culture is the way of life of a group of people: ". . . What is learned, from whom learning takes place, and when the learning of certain skills occurs varies according to culture" (Kluckhohn, 1962: 26-27). The concept of culture is made necessary by the plasticity of human beings. "Newborn members of different groups are taught to carry out the 'same' acts in an almost infinite variety of different ways" (Kluckhohn, 1962:22). Thus,

> American society is pluristic: that is, on major issues and problems of the times, there is no consensus. A range of values and norms, arising from different experiences and behaviors, conflict and contrast on the American scene (Manning and Truzzi, eds., 1972:49).

Kluckhohn further notes that ". . . any culture is, among other things, a set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and to other men" (Kluckhohn, 1962:27).

The following paradigm, proposed by Kluckhohn, enables social scientists to differentiate between "distinct culture" and "subcultures of one culture."

> When people from two groups, despite perceptible variations in the details of their life-ways, nevertheless share enough basic assumptions so that they can communicate--in the broadest sense of the term--comfortably, then their cultures are only variants of a single culture (Kluckhohn, 1962:65).

Thus, in order for a "distinct culture" to exist it is not sufficient that the life style of a people vary from that of other groups. They must also have different assumptions about life (Kluckhohn, 1965:65).

Along with Kluckhohn, Kroeber (1948) explicitly distinguishes between culture and subcultures. According to Kroeber, the age levels

and sexes exhibit distinct subcultures just as "each class in a society exhibits a more or less distinct phase, a subculture, of the total culture carried by society; as geographical segments of society manifest regional aspects of the culture" (Kroeber, 1948:274). Kroeber notes that

> the ages are inevitably continuous and overlapping, as sexes and many classes are not. Culture phases associated with age may be assumed to correspond to changes taking place in the culture, rather than to reflect chronic or static lines of segregation like those between social classes. Individuals above fifty will largely be trying to practice and maintain their established habits and status, and therewith a phase of culture some of which is just beginning to pass; those under thirty will be interested in the phase that is trying to arrive (Kroeber, 1948:274-275).

Kroeber gives special mention to the age group labelled "adolescent" in America. According to Kroeber, the typical adolescent culture

> is a special twist given the standard culture; a conscious departure from some elements of it, or a sort of deliberately distorted reflection. Ordinarily there is no real revolt, nor seeking a reform, but a basic conformity with the existing order, accentuated by an assertion of age-class independence . . . (Kroeber, 1948:275).

In other words, most adolescent, or student, cultures are not deviant subcultures, but rather a variety of the dominant culture. Adolescent subcultures, therefore, serve to reinforce the dominant culture by offering the individual alternative ways of responding to the basic cultural patterns of a society.

Eisenstadt (1956) also is concerned with age levels or age groups. However, while Kroeber notes the relationship between age groups and the culture of society, Eisenstadt is concerned with the functions of the various age groups within the social system. Specifically, Eisenstadt examines the extent to which the various types of age group "perform

integrative or disintegrative functions in the social system" (Eisenstadt, 1956:269).

According to Eisenstadt, any group or institution "is seen to perform integrative functions in so far as it contributes to the continuity of the social system" (Eisenstadt, 1956:270). Eisenstadt employs the term continuity to refer to the continuous performance of the main institutional roles by groups and institutions (Eisenstadt, 1956:170). Eisenstadt postulates that age groups are more apt to

> arise in societies in which the family (or kinship unit) does not constitute the main unit of the social and economic division of labor, and in which the individual must acquire and learn various general role dispositions that cannot be learned within the family (Eisenstadt, 1956:270).

The age groups in these societies serve as channels for the learning of the general role dispositions. Age groups, therefore, may be said to "constitute an interlinking sphere between the family and other institutionalized spheres of society" (Eisenstadt, 1956:170).

One type of age group that flourishes in modern societies is the youth group. Eisenstadt contends that youth groups in modern societies are never "fully adequate as an interlinking sphere, and cannot fulfill fully integrative functions," (Eisenstadt, 1956:289) since they arise from the adolescent's perceived inadequacy of the school as an interlinking sphere. He further notes that "none of the age groups in modern societies can be said to perform fully sanctioned tasks within the main institutional spheres of the social system" (Eisenstadt, 1956:289). There are two reasons that age groups do not perform fully sanctioned tasks. First, age groups, particularly youth groups, do not generally perform routine tasks within society. Rather, the tasks they perform

are symbolic of their commitment to the ultimate value of the society (Eisenstadt, 1956:289). Second, membership in age groups rarely bestow upon the individual full social status in the society. This is especially true of youth groups (Eisenstadt, 1956:290).

This section of this chapter has dealt with the concept subculture. The distinction was made between the concept culture and the concept subculture. The role of age groups within the culture of society was noted. Finally, the functions of age groups in modern societies was discussed.

Substantive Literature

Having reviewed the theoretical literature, we will now turn to the substantive literature. In sociology, substantive literature is a theoretical work that is directly related to the empirical world. Thus, the literature reviewed in this section is concerned with the empirical world, rather than with concepts and theory.

Waller (1937) in his article "The Rating and Dating Complex" illustrates the pressure that peer groups, as reference groups, can and do exert upon the individual. He perceives dating and courtship to be separate activities "governed by greatly different norms, and engaged in for different purposes, although courtship may emerge from dating" (Burchinal, 1964:643). According to Waller, dating in America is dominated "with the quest for thrills" (Burchinal, 1964:643).

Waller believes the rating and dating complex to be a function "of a competitive setting, and refers to the manner in which one achieves and retains prestige through the dating of prestigeful others" (Stryker, 1964:146). He further believes that the rating and dating

complex tends "to generate antagonism between the sexes, creating a favorable environment for exploitation" (Stryker, 1964:146).

Waller found that the collegiate culture develops complex conditions for dating in order to facilitate the attainment of the goal of social mobility and the desire for sex. Waller's findings suggest two questions for this study. First, do the two categories of student--resident and non-resident--develop a rating and dating complex? Second, does one of the categories, for example the resident students, develop a more complex dating system than the other? It was ultimately found in the present study that the resident informants do actually develop a rating and dating complex, while the non-resident informants do not.

As with Waller, Clark and Trow (1966) were concerned with student peer groups. Clark and Trow describe four types of student subculture that may be found on college campuses. They are: collegiate, vocational, academic and nonconformist. The types of subculture emerge from a combination of two variables: "the degree to which students are involved with ideas and the extent to which students identify with their colleges" (Clark and Trow, 1966:24-25).

It should be noted that the types of subculture are not types of student even though we frequently describe subcultures by characterizing their members, for "an individual student may well participate in several of the subcultures available on his campus, though in most cases one will embody his dominant orientations" (Clark and Trow, 1966:19).

In the present research the two subcultures of informants can be identified on the basis of their dominant mode. The non-resident informants can be identified as belonging primarily to the academic

subculture, since they work hard, get "good grades," and "let the world of ideas and knowledge reach them" (Clark and Trow, 1966:22). Also, the non-resident informants frequently became so involved with their course-work that they did more than the minimum amount of reading and studying. In contrast, the dominant mode for the resident informants is the collegiate culture, as they are concerned with fraternities and sororities, dates and campus fun. Receiving only equal or secondary priority to these are teachers, courses and grades.

Clark and Trow see the possibility of several student cultures being present on any campus while Becker et al. (1961) found only one student subculture on a university campus. The difference in findings seems to be due to the fact that the two studies examine different dimensions. Clark and Trow were conderned with student involvement with ideas and student identification with their colleges. In contract, Becker et al. were concerned with whether the actions of students are individual or collective. Furthermore, Becker and his coworkers focused their attention primarily on the academic aspect of collegiate life, whereas Clark and Trow focused their attention on the whole of student life. Probably the reason that Becker and his team saw only the emergence of one student subculture is that in the 1961 study they dealt solely with medical students, who are unique in many ways. It is the contention of this thesis that on any university campus there probably exists more than one student subculture, though not necessarily all four of the subcultures as suggested by Clark and Trow.

In a later study, Becker et al. (1968) were concerned with undergraduates rather than medical students. The study made use of the

student perspective. According to Becker and his colleagues, the student perspective is the sum of a complex set of ideas and activities. The student perspective can be divided, analytically, into several components. First, a definition of the situation evolves among the students providing them with a "common frame of reference in which communication may take place" (Becker et al., 1968:28). Second, the perspective contains specifications as to the kinds of activities "one may properly and sensibly engage in" (Becker et al., 1968:29). Finally, the perspective contains "criteria of judgment, standards of value against which people may be judged" (Becker et al., 1968:30). Thus, the perspective provides students with a basis for evaluating the behavior of other students as well as that of the faculty. It is important to note that the perspective "is a description of what students do and think" (Becker et al., 1968:30) rather than an explanation of their behavior.

Becker et al. note that students generally divide college life into three major areas: academic work, campus organizations, and personal relationships. The findings of this thesis tend to confirm Becker's observation that students do categorize college life into the three separate areas.

In the same study Becker et al. employed the definition of the situation as their theoretical perspective in analyzing the patterns of collective action students develop in the realm of academic work. Becker et al. found two conditions which influence students' academic activity. The first condition is the students'

> relationship of subjection to faculty and administration. Rules governing academic work are made unilaterally, the administration setting the terms on which students can remain

> in school and engage in a variety of other available activities, and the faculty setting the work to be done and evaluating its adequacy (Becker et al., 1968:131).

The second condition, and the one relevant to this study, is the ability of students to act collectively. In other words, Becker et al. found academic activity to be a collective response of students to the situation in which they find themselves (Becker et al., 1968:131).

Jencks and Riesman (1969) discuss the conflict that is present between faculty and students. According to Jencks and Riesman, students develop subcultures as a result of the conflict between themselves and the faculty (Jencks and Riesman, 1969:28). In other words, they see student subcultures as a response to the college environment as to Becker et al. However, while Jencks and Riesman perceive the emergence of student subcultures as a response to the conflict with faculty, Becker et al. see it as a response to the pressure for grades.

It is worth noting that this writer has found that the informants at Creighton also respond to the college environment in a collective manner. It was observed that the collective response of the informants emerged from their definition of college life.

Davie and Hare (1956) in their study of undergraduate life at an American college for men were concerned with patterns of intellectual activity. With respect to study habits, Davie and Hare note that there are two general types of student: "those who study regularly and manage to keep up with all their assignments, and those who leave their assignments until the last minute" (Davie and Hare, 1956:16). Davie and Hare's observation provided this writer with insight into the differing behavior of the resident and non-resident students who are the

focus of this study.

In the preceding paragraphs, the substantive literature concerned with peer groups and student subculture was reviewed. The contributions made by Becker and his colleagues in the area of student subculture was emphasized. In the following section, methodological perspectives for studying peer groups and subcultures will be discussed.

Methodological Literature

In the final section of this chapter, the discussion will focus on the literature of qualitative methodology. Specifically, it will deal with the technique of participant observation. The literature concerned with participant observation can be divided into two categories: (1) the problems the researcher faces as an observer, and (2) the kinds of data obtained by means of participant observation. The first category of literature to be discussed deals with the problems the researcher faces as an observer.

Bruyn (1966:14) notes that the observer must become as familiar with the background of those observed as possible in order to be able to share in their life activities. He also points out that the observer's very presence influences the social situation (Bruyn, 1966:14). There is, however, little the observer can do to limit his influence. One measure that is available, and was employed by the present observer in this study was to avoid engaging in "hot" discussions. Bruyn further notes that the observer, in order to remain objective, must not become too personally involved in the lives of those he is studying (Bruyn, 1966:15).

Selltiz et al. (1959) discuss the technique of unstructured observation. According them, the participant observer employing the technique "takes on, to some extent at least, the role of a member of the group and participates in its functioning" (Selltiz et al., 1959:207). They note that

> Since unstructured observation is often used as an exploratory technique, the observer's understanding of the situation is likely to change as he goes along. This, in turn, may call for changes in what he observes, at least to the extent of making the content of observation more specific; and often the changes called for may be quite radical. These changes in the content of observation . . . represent the optimal use of unstructured observation (Selltiz et al., 1959:208).

They further contend that "the shift in focus often goes hand in hand with narrowing the scope of observation" (Selltiz et al., 1959:208).

In the present study, the investigator made use of unstructured observation as an exploratory technique. In the process of using this approach, her focus shifted from concern with the amount of influence parents can exert on their daughters when they reside at home as contrasted to dormitories to the attitudinal differences between resident and non-resident students. The shift in focus was partly the result of the investigator narrowing the scope of her study.

According to Trice (1956), a certain amount of information is available to the observer as an outsider--a stranger--that would not otherwise be available to him. In his study of two groups of alcoholics, Trice used the label of outsider in the three following ways. First, he insisted that they--the alcoholics--were the experts not he himself. Second, he was able to study the communication systems among the two categories of alcoholic. Finally, he remained an outsider in his overt

behavior by not becoming a part of the treatment staff (Trice, 1956:29).

In the present study, Trice's suggestions were found to be useful. By emphasizing that the students were experts in the area of college life, the researcher found that she was more readily accepted and was able to obtain more information than if she had not stressed the expertise of her informants.

She was also able to observe the type and degree of communication between the two categories of student. Meaningful communication or interaction between the resident and non-resident informants was minimal. It was observed that when the two categories of informant interacted it was frequently in the context of the classroom environment. Only on rare occasions did the researcher observe the resident and non-resident informants interacting in the student union. Resident and non-resident informants were most likely to interact when they registered for the same course.

Finally, the researcher remained at least a partial outsider in her behavior by not speaking to faculty and students she had known when she had attended Creighton. Such behavior probably ensured the researcher of the informants' continued perception of her as an outsider. By remaining an outsider in her overt behavior, the researcher was given the confidence of the informants. If she had not taken this precaution--refraining from speaking to previous Creighton acquaintances, there might have been questions about her motives and thereby lose access to valuable information.

Blum (1952) was concerned with how the researcher as an outsider can obtain valid data. The securing of valid data is a question to which every researcher addresses himself. Unless the data are valid,

the conclusions based on the data are meaningless.

Blum notes three preconditions necessary for securing valid information which this researcher found useful. The first precondition is that the "researcher must have the trust and confidence of the persons who give the information" (Blum, 1952:41). If the researcher does not have the trust of those he is studying, his data are apt to be biased thus invalid. The second precondition is that the researcher must understand the language of the people he is observing, and he must be aware of any word which has a special connotation (Blum, 1952:41). The researcher's consciousness of the "psychological dynamics" of the situation is the third precondition necessary for obtaining valid data (Blum, 1952:41). By psychological dynamics Blum refers to the ability of the researcher to understand different value positions as well as the ability to interpret and evaluate the material collected. Thus, Blum believes that by having the trust and confidence of the informants, by understanding the language of the informants, and by being aware of the psychological dynamics of the situation; the researcher can be fairly certain that his data are valid.

Having reviewed some of the problems the researcher faces as an observer, the discussion will now turn to the literature concerned with the kinds of data obtained through participant observation. Bruyn notes that the participant observer "must interpret and conceptualize his data in distinctive ways," (Bruyn, 1966:34) as well as describe his data. The analysis of the data includes separating events, beliefs, and patterns of conduct in hopes of discovering new relationships (Bruyn, 1966:34). Thus, it was only by analyzing the data in this manner that

the importance of the definition of college life to the emergence of student subcultures was perceived by the present investigator.

Vidich observes that "data collection does not take place in a vacuum" (Vidich, 1955:359). The social position of the observer and the images which respondents hold of him influence the types of data he is able to collect. In order for the evaluation of the data to be correct, Vidich states, the major dimensions of the social situation must be comprehended, these include "the social positions of the observer and the observed and the relationship between them . . ." (Vidich, 1955:359). Thus, the investigator must always note the source and the context in which the data were acquired. In other words, the investigator will obtain different types of data from a private informal conversation with an informant than from a group rap session.

The fact that the social scientist influences the collection of his data is also mentioned by Phillips who sees the collection of data as a social process. Therefore, the collection of data shares "features in common with other social situations and events of human interaction" (Phillips, 1971:10). Phillips further contends that the social scientist must take into account the process by which he collected his data.

Becker and Geer (1957) compare the different results that are obtained when one uses participant observation as contrasted to those from the undirected interview. They focus their attention on three concrete problems: learning the native language, matters interviewers are unable or unwilling to talk about, and things people see through distorting lenses.

The problem of language and the fact that people perceive things

differently are two reasons why this study employs the technique of participant observation. As Becker and Geer note, every group is to a degree culturally different from other groups, and has "a somewhat different set of common understandings around which action is organized, and these differences will find expression in a language" (Becker and Geer, 1957:29) which is somewhat unique to that group. The investigator in the present study, as might be expected, had very little difficulty penetrating the language barrier of the two types of informant even though the informants perceived college life differently.

Becker and Geer state that the interviewer will have gaps in his information on topics of importance if for some reason the interviewee cannot or will not discuss particular topics. When the investigator spends a great deal of time with the people he studies, he is less likely to find gaps in his data (Becker and Geer, 1957:30). The researcher is able to observe the things that might not be reported in an interview. In this writer's experience the formal interview was not as fruitful and/or insightful as might have been hoped but the informal interviews and casual observations filled gaps with more meaningful data than otherwise would have been available.

In this chapter the relevant literature concerning reference groups and student subculture has been reviewed. Specifically, three types of literature that focus on reference groups and student subcultures were examined: theoretical, substantive, and methodological. In the first section of the chapter, reference group and subculture theories were reviewed. Second, the substantive literature attempted to apply reference group theory and subculture theory to a specific problem. Last, two

categories of methodological literature have been reviewed: the problems the researcher faces as an observer and the kind of data that is obtained by participant observation.

The following chapter will discuss in detail the methods employed in gathering and analyzing the data. Chapter III will, therefore, elaborate upon many of the points discussed in the final section of the one just concluded.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

> Only by laying bare and solving substantive problems can sciences be established and their methods developed (Weber, 1949:116).

This research is an exploratory case study of the impact of peer groups upon the formation of student subcultures at Creighton University. The case study is

> A method of studying social phenomena through the thorough analysis of an individual case. . . . The case study method gives a unitary character to the data being studied by interrelating a variety of facts to a single case. It also provides an opportunity for the intensive analysis of many specific details that are often overlooked with other methods. This approach rests on the assumption that the case being studied is typical of cases of a certain type, so that through intensive analysis generalizations may be made which will be applicable to other cases of the same type (Theodorsen and Theodorsen, 1960:38).

Because information regarding subcultures cannot always be obtained adequately through quantitative methods such as surveys or controlled experiments, this study is qualitative. Thus, the questions raised in this study are fundamentally different from those of a quantitative study. The researcher, therefore, was concerned with the kind and quality of the informants' involvement in student organizations, rather than with the frequency of their participation. In other words, the researcher was concerned with the nature of the informants' involvement in the various areas of student life and not with how often the informants participated in the various student activities. The researcher, therefore, was not concerned, for example, solely with the frequency of dating in which informants in the two categories engaged. She also noted

the norms that emerged with respect to dating among the resident and non-resident women students.

Different types of social phenomena are studied in different ways. As Riesman and Jencks note,

> To the extent that a college is a subculture, with its own idiosyncratic customs and concerns, an anthropologist can study it in much the same way that he studies a primitive tribe or a modern community (Riesman and Jencks, 1962:104).

An effective method available to a social scientist for studying a community is participant observation. Because subcultures can be studied in the same manner as communities the method employed in this study is principally that of participant observation.

Participant observation is a methodological approach with its own principles and procedures. It involves observing, recording, analyzing and reporting. These activities are interrelated and interdependent, and are culminated in the fourth activity--reporting. A large portion of the observer's time is spent making reports of what was observed, even that which appears at the moment to be trite or insignificant. The reason for this is that often what appears at first to be trite or insignificant provides insight and understanding about the social situation and the people observed (Junker, 1960:12-22). For example, the different definitions of college held by the two types of student--resident and non-resident--at first seemed rather insignificant to the researcher. After analyzing the data, however, it was apparent that the different definitions of college life influenced, at least indirectly, the emergence of two distinct subcultures.

The purpose of participant observation differs from that of many

quantitative measures in that it seeks to understand and interpret rather than predict human behavior. A social scientist employing the technique emphasizes that it is necessary to understand human behavior before it can be predicted.

According to Bruyn (1966), participant observation field studies can be distinguished from other studies by the following axioms and their corollaries. The axioms anticipate some of the major issues and problems encountered by participant observers.

> Axiom 1: The participant observer shares in the life activity and sentiments of people in face-to-face relationships (Bruyn, 1966:13).

In order to achieve this objective, this investigator immersed herself in the relevant peer group and subculture literature. With this background material, she was able to foresee certain difficulties in the actual field research and, thus, take appropriate measures. For example, the problem of the observer's presence influencing the social situation is paramount, especially in qualitative studies. Bruyn's (1966:14) two suggestions proved useful in this study. First, the observer refrains from engaging in "hot" discussions. Second, the observer does not become so personally involved in the lives of the people he is studying that he can no longer study them objectively.

The background material also provided the investigator with primitive knowledge about the students she studied. For instance, the work of Becker and his colleagues (1968) provided the writer with insight into the manner in which students perceive college life.

Becoming familiar with the relevant literature, therefore, serves two functions. First, it enables the researcher to foresee and prevent

certain difficulties from arising in the field. Second, it provides the researcher with a certain knowledge about the problem to be investigated prior to entering the field.

After acquiring the background information, the observer enters the field and becomes involved in the social situations of those he is observing. In the process of observing, the investigator is changed "as well as changing to some degree the situation in which he is a participant" (Bruyn, 1966:14). Thus, the observer himself is altered by the social situations he is studying. This researcher was certainly altered by her experiences in the field as a participant, and by the knowledge she acquired regarding peer groups and student subcultures. Specifically, the knowledge and thus the understanding of college students that the researcher has obtained through this study has altered her further encounters with college students as compared to previous associations.

Bruyn believes that although the observer is changed through his participation, "it is important that the change not be total in character, that some part should remain unchanged and detached" (Bruyn, 1966:14).

> Corollary: The role of the participant observer requires both detachment and personal involvement (Bruyn, 1966:14).

Therefore, the observer, though involved, should not become so involved that he can no longer be objective. The investigator in this study attempted to remain detached and objective by refraining from taking sides in discussions, and by trying to avoid influencing the informants.

> Axiom 2: The participant observer is a normal part of the culture and the life of the people under observation (Bruyn, 1966:15).

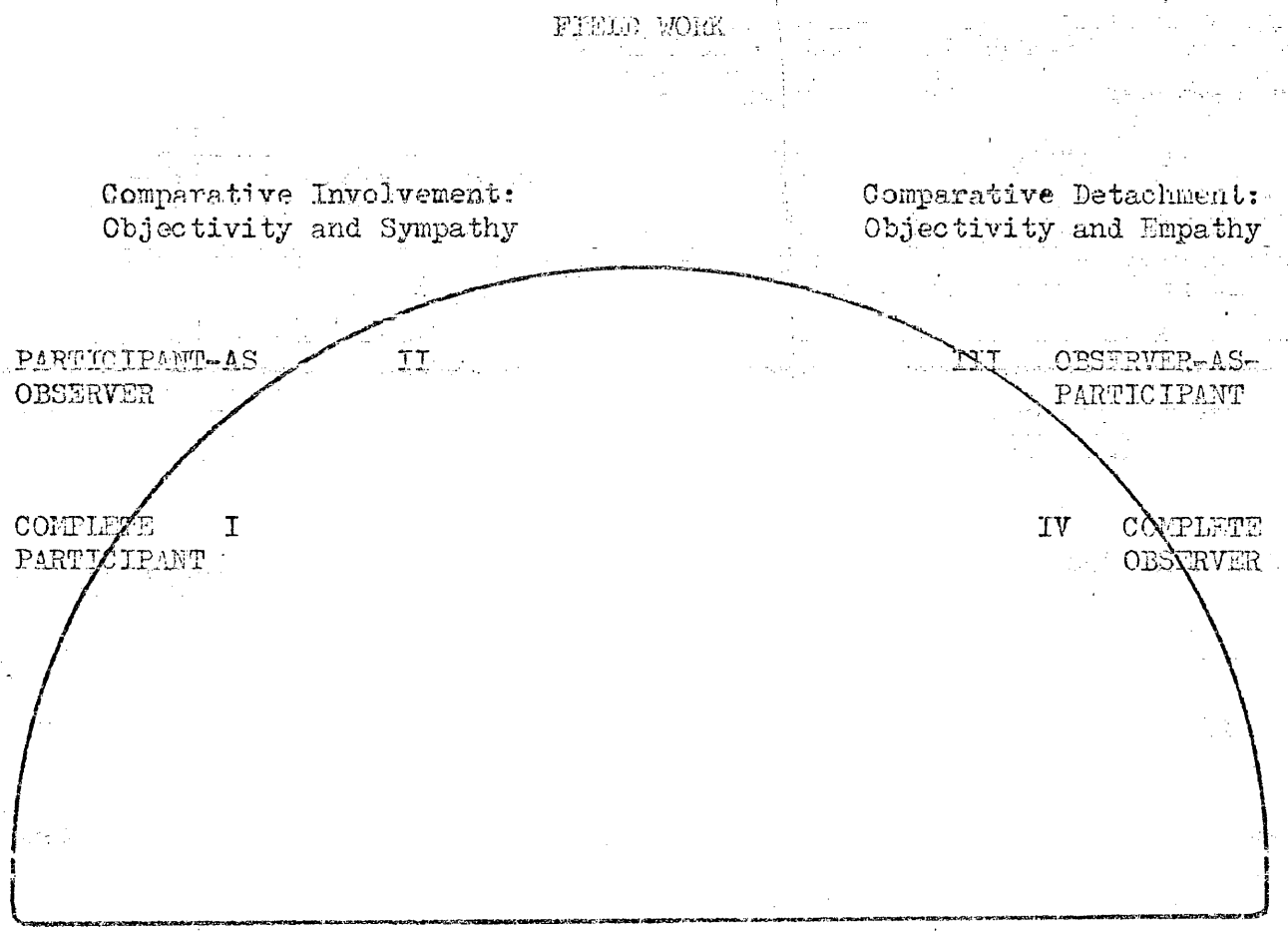
The role of participant observer may take many forms. Regardless of the form, the participant observer's role is integrated with that of the people he is studying. The role of any one participant observer is dependent upon the research design, the culture observed, and the ability of the researcher to assume certain tasks.

Buford H. Junker (1960) has delineated four social roles of a field worker. The chart on the following page sets forth Junker's conception of the theoretical social roles for the field worker. "These range from the polar ideal type of complete participant to that of complete observer, . . ." (Junker, 1960:35). The role of complete participant implies that the field worker is actively involved in the lives of those he is studying. Thus, he views the activities of his informants subjectively, and tends to be sympathetic to their problems. In contrast, the role of complete observer conveys the notion that the field worker remains detached from those he is studying. The field worker, therefore, views his informants objectively and expresses only empathy toward their problems (Junker, 1960: 35-37).

In the following paragraphs, the writer will summarize what is known about the four social positions and the activities of the field worker taking these roles. It should be noted that each role determines the activities of the field worker assuming that role.

The first role to be discussed is that of complete participant.

> In this role, the observer's activities as such are wholly concealed. The field worker is or becomes a complete member of an in-group, thus sharing secret information guarded from outsiders (Junker, 1960:35).



THEORETICAL SOCIAL ROLES FOR FIELD WORKER

Source: Buford H. Junker, 1960:36.

Thus, the observer's role is hidden from the people observed.

The second possible role of a field worker is that of participant-as-observer. In this case, the "the field worker's observer activities are not wholly concealed, but are . . . , subordinated to activities as participant, ..." (Junker, 1960:36). In other words, the observer's role as participant dominants.

The observer-as-participant is the third possible role of the field worker. In this instance, the field worker's role as observer is publicly known at the outset to the people being studied. This role has the advantage of permitting the social scientist maximum freedom and access to information.

Finally, the field worker may take the role of complete observer.

> This describes a range of roles in which, at one extreme, the observer hides behind a one-way mirror, perhaps equipped with sound film facilities, and at the other extreme, his activities are completely public in a special kind of theoretical group where there are, by consensus, 'no secrets' and 'nothing sacred' (Junker, 1960:37).

Thus, the researcher, who assumes the role of complete observer, does not participate at all in the activities of the people he is studying.

Of the four social roles available to the field worker, I selected the role of observer-as-participant for myself. There are several reasons for this. First, it facilitated entry into the field. The roles of complete participant and participant-as-observer, require a lenghty entry period, while the role of observer-as-participant does not. Second, the role of observer-as-participant permitted maximum freedom to move from one category of informant to another. Finally, this role allowed easy access to many types of information. For instance, I was

able to verify the data provided by the informants through discussions with students who were not subject to direct intensive observation.

In this study, I decided not to be a disguised observer for two reasons. The first was the amount of time that would be needed in preparation prior to entering the field. The second revolved around the ethical question of whether the researcher has a right to disclose or make public the information he obtains under false pretenses. Upon entering the field, the researcher told the informants that she was doing study of college students. This explanation usually sufficed, and no other questions were asked.

> Corollary: The scientific role of the participant observer is interdependence with his social role in the culture of the observed (Bruyn, 1966:18).

Thus, the participant observer

> seeks to apprehend, register, interpret, and conceptualize the social facts and meanings which he finds in a prescribed area of study. He is interested in people as they are, not as he thinks they ought to be according to some standard of his own; he is interested in the lack of uniformity as well as the uniformities of their culture, in the unpredictable as well as the predictable state of human existence (Bruyn, 1966:19).

In other words, the participant observer is able to study a social situation and its participants in depth. This concern with the process of human behavior and its unpredictable aspect is one of the advantages of participant observation.

> Axiom 3: The role of the participant observer reflects the social process of living in society (Bruyn, 1966:20).

In other words, the conclusions and understandings gained in one study can have significance for other groups. For instance, Becker and his colleagues (1968) note that the response of college students to the college environment is a collective one. This conclusion lead this in-

vestigator to consider the possibility that students at Creighton University also may respond collectively to the college environment.

Informant Selection

There are two criteria for informant selection for this study: apparent typicality of students and acceptance of the researcher's presence. The non-resident informants were selected after three days in the field, because their behavior appeared to be typical of that portion of the general student body. Also, the non-resident informants readily accepted the researcher's presence among them on campus. Almost immediately the researcher was invited to participate in their activities.

The resident informants were selected after the investigator had spent three days in Delgmen Hall. The resident informants' behavior appeared to be representative of other freshmen residing in Delgmen Hall. It was more difficult "achieving rapport"--the process by which the field worker enters into relationships with those observed--with the resident informants. The investigator experienced more difficulty with the resident informants, because they are a more cohesive group and maintain more stringent boundaries.

Interviews

The investigator as an observer participant was able to obtain various types of information. One technique, which was employed in gathering information, was the formal interview. The interview, which was administered at the end of the first phase of the study, was developed from the observational data. In developing the interview, the

investigator first went through her field notes looking for apparently significant observations and recurring themes. The investigator was particularly watchful for those areas of inquiry which had the greatest potential for yielding the greatest understanding of the ways the attitudes held by students can be influenced by various peer groups.

In the process of reorganizing her data, the investigator systemically organized the data chronologically and according to observations and topics. Thus, the data dealing with the topic of academic work was separated from the data relating to the informants' definition of the college life, their involvement in student organizations, and their personal relations.

The topics the investigator found to be potentially useful were academic work, student organizations, and personal relations. After determining the categories of the observational data, the researcher developed indicators of the three.

The indicators of academic work are:

1. the number of hours students studied per week.
2. the number of classes students cut per week.
3. the number and nature of discussions students had with faculty members outside the classroom.

There are three indicators of students' involvement in student organizations. They are:

1. the number and type of campus-related activities in which the student was involved.
2. the extent of support students gave collegiate athletic activities.

3. the number and type of activities and interests students engaged in outside the university.

No questions were asked on the formal interview regarding the area of personal relations, as the investigator believed that this type of data could best be obtained through observation.

The formal interview was primarily used for collecting background and comparative data while the informal interviews conducted throughout the study were more fruitful in gaining insight and understanding of the influence of peer groups upon student subcultures.

Scope

The study of the impact of peer groups upon student subcultures at Creighton University is an exploratory study. As such, it provides an introduction to an important question, namely, what impact do peer groups have on the emergence of student subcultures. The findings and conclusions of this research may serve as points of departure for future studies of subcultures. The study further serves as a minor fact-index to the subject of subcultures. Thus, it will augment the present knowledge and understanding that social scientists have of subcultures and student life at institutions of higher learning.

CHAPTER IV

THE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

> . . . no college is immune to outside influence because students have parents, and close to a quarter of American undergraduates are also married. Furthermore, most students have had jobs, and all have future occupations. Even among the faculty, aspirations and friendships often extend beyond academia, . . . (Riesman and Jencks, 1962:105).

The foregoing calls attention to the fact that no college exists in a void, and that a college must and does respond to the outside environment. While every college has many demands made on it from the outside, much can be learned from examining the college environment as a separate unit.

By environment, social scientists mean the "effective environment, that is, everything that stimulates and influences the behavior of the individual or group" (Theodorsen and Theodorsen, 1969:132). Hence the college environment refers to the elements on the college campus that influence and stimulate the relationships between faculty and students, administrators and students, and students with one another.

It is important to describe the college environment in some detail, because it bears so importantly on how the university as a social system functions. As a social system the university has a structure which impinges on the life of the students, and therefore, on the type of student subcultures that develop.

On even the smallest campus, the college environment is composed of at least four elements: physical, classroom, administrative, and peer.

Before describing the physical environment of Creighton University, the writer will discuss the types of student that Creighton attracts as

well as mention the programs which Creighton offers. A discussion of these two factors will aid the reader in understanding the conditions under which peer groups influence the emergence of student subcultures.

Creighton University tends to attract students from the upper-middle and lower-upper economic classes. Its tuition rates are, for example, for the College of Arts and Science, $61 per credit hour for those taking fewer than twelve hours, and $975 per semester for those taking between twelve and eighteen hours.[1] Creighton's entire student population is not from the well-to-do classes because of its many scholarship programs.[2]

Creighton University consists of eight colleges and schools including a College of Arts and Science.[3] Creighton's College of Arts and Science aims to provide its students with a liberal arts education (Creighton University Bulletin, 1971-1973:48).

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[1]Tuition for the fall of 1973 was raised.

[2]Scholarships for the freshmen are: President's Scholar Award, Metropolitan Competitive Scholarships, Special Honor Scholarships, Creighton Ak-sar-ben Scholarships, Creighton-Omaha Firemen's Benefit Association Scholarship, Peter and Evelyn Kiewit Scholarship, Martin Luther King Scholarship and Family Scholarships.

Scholarships for upperclassmen are: Future Teacher Scholarship, the Haskins & Sells Foundation Accounting Award, Nebraska C.P.A. Scholarship, Omaha Press Club Scholarship, Associated Nebraska Industrial Editors Scholarship, and the Omaha Sales Executives' Club Scholarship (Creighton University Bulletin, 1971-1973:68-70).

[3]Other schools and colleges are: College of Business Administration, College of Nursing, School of Dentistry, School of Medicine, School of Pharmacy and a Graduate School.

Physical Environment

Having noted the type of student which Creighton attracts and the general and specific types of scholarship programs it offers, the discussion will turn to the physical environment. The physical environment includes the location of the University, the characteristics of the living quarters, and the walking distances between classrooms and library.

Creighton University was founded in 1878, and is located in Omaha, Nebraska. The Omaha metropolitan area has a population of over 500,000. The main campus of the university is situated on a sizable tract of land approximately fifteen minute's walk from the downtown business district of Omaha. Presently, the medical clinic and pharmacy are located approximately two miles from the main campus, but these will become a part of the main campus upon completion of the multimillion-dollar Criss Medical Center (Creighton University Bulletin, 1971-1973:39).

Creighton University is a residential university. There are four dormitories on the campus: Swanson Hall for men, Delgman, Gallagher and Kiewit Halls for women. Delgman Hall provides housing for freshmen while Gallagher and Kiewit Halls house upperclasswomen. Each set of dormitories is connected by an adjoining dining hall. Swanson and Delgman Halls are located at the east end of the campus, while Gallagher and Kiewit Halls are located at the west end. It is approximately a five-to-ten-minute walk from one end of campus to the other. However, the walk may at times seem somewhat longer to some persons because the east end of the campus is located at top of a hill.

The Alumni Memorial Library is centrally located and is the focal

point of the campus. It is much easier for two students at opposite ends of the campus to meet at the library than for one of the students to walk from one end of the campus to the other.

The College of Arts and Science does not have its own building in which to hold classes. It schedules most of its classes in the Administration and Business Administration buildings. The Administration building is located at the east end of the campus, while the Business Administration building is situated behind the library.

Besides its four residence halls, two dining halls, and library, the University has its own church, gymnasium, radio station and campus store.

Classroom Environment

Students and faculty on American college campuses are required to interact, even at the most rudimentary level, by the classroom situation. Every student attending an institution of higher education in America, regardless of the school or his program, is affected by the classroom environment.

The classroom can be described as "the workplace in which grades, . . . , are exchanged for academic performance, . . . and in which there is an agreement between teachers and students, . . ." (Becker et al., 1968:63) regarding the kind and amount of academic work that must be done to receive a certain grade. This agreement between instructors and students can be conceived as analogous to a contract between employer and employee. Sometimes the contract is announced at the beginning of the semester. In such instances, the instructor spells

out the requirements for each letter grade. At other times, the contract is subject to bargaining as in the cases where the student contracts with the instructor for a certain grade. Still other instructors may announce their policies in a piecemeal manner throughout the entire semester. In all three cases the contract is "fulfilled in the course of the semester as teachers and students interact in and out of the classroom" (Becker et al., 1968:64).

As the foregoing implies, instructors vary in the way they announce their grade policies. For example, one instructor at Creighton distributes a mimeographed list of what a student must do in order to receive "A," "B," "C," "D," or "F." In another class, the instructor passes out a mimeographed sheet delineating the procedure for obtaining an "F." The instructor, in other words, announces his requirements in a negative fashion.

Some instructors seem unaware that their casual statements about grades, exams, and papers are regarded as binding commitments. For instance, one instructor casually mentioned early in the semester that there might not be a final exam. The students having accepted this as a statement of policy were enraged when, two weeks before final exams, the instructor announced what material was to be covered on the final examination.

The classroom environment may be analyzed from one of several perspectives. For instance, Becker et al. (1968) examine the reciprocal relations between students and faculty in terms of four variables: class organization (size), formal requirements, classroom behavior, and the acquisition of knowledge (Becker et al., 1968:68-76).

In the present study the classroom environment is examined in terms of the following: instructor's behavior, student's behavior, and modus operandi of the class. Here the modus operandi refers to how structured or unstructured the class is. The modus operandi excludes the format the instructor employs--that is, whether it is a lecture, discussion, or a combination thereof as these are considered aspects of the instructor's behavior.

The instructor's behavior includes the frequency of lectures in contrast to discussion or other techniques, the types of assignments and his tolerance of questions from students. More important than the instructor's actual behavior is the students' perception of the his or her behavior. Students' perception of the instructor's behavior is important in terms of the W. I. Thomas dictum: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." A paramount element in the classroom environment, therefore, is students' perception of class organization.

There was not complete consensus either between the two categories of informants--resident and non-resident--nor among individuals regarding preferred teaching techniques. It appears that preference is partially dependent on the needs of the individual student. However, the majority of students from each category preferred lecture with discussion. The following statement by one of the non-resident informants (Ann) exemplifies the reason for this preference:

> There is [in lecture with discussion] a possibility of interchange between students and teacher. One cannot get enough information and background material with just discussion. Lecture, however, lacks feedback.

Another non-resident informant (Jan) noted that

> it [lecture with discussion] is not as monotonous as straight lecture. You get time to ask questions if you don't understand the material. Also, you can ask for the elaboration of a point made by either the instructor or the text.

Besides personal needs, organizational preference is also dependent on the techniques to which the student has been exposed.[1] Most of the informants--both resident and non-resident--had been exposed only to lecture, discussion, and lecture with discussion. Only four of the nineteen informants (one resident and three non-resident) had been in a team-teaching situation. One non-resident student (Mary Alice) who had taken a class where team-teaching had been implemented commented, " I prefer team-teaching, because one gets a variety of viewpoints."

Though most of the informants preferred lecture with discussion, not all the informants preferred this. For instance, one day on their way to an English class in which the instructor combined lecture and discussion Eileen, Jan and Sandy were discussing the organization of the class. Eileen commented,

> I don't like this class. I think I would like it better if it was all discussion. There just isn't enough give and take of ideas [in this English class]. The instructor's ideas predominate even in the lecture with discussion format.

Jan replied,

> Generally, I don't like straight discussion. I think we need the instructor's insight and guidance in exploring ideas. After all, the instructor is more familiar with a particular topic than we are.

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[1] None of the observed students had been in a seminar situation. This is probably because this type of situation is more frequent in upper division courses.

Sandy responded,

> I prefer the give and take of ideas that occurs within a discussion group, but sometimes the discussion group doesn't come to any conclusions. I think the instructor's views are helpful in such cases.

It appears, therefore, that the preference for various teaching techniques is, at least partly, dependent upon individual student needs and previous classroom experiences. Obviously, the manner in which students perceive the class organization and instructor's behavior influences their attitudes regarding the class and their behavior in class as well as what they actually learn.

A second element in the classroom environment is the student's behavior. It was observed that the informant's behavior in the classroom, for the most part, is a response to the instructor's behavior. The informants typically react to the instructor's behavior in one of two ways: actively or passively. Active behavior embodies such conduct as asking questions, taking notes, and attempting to clarify another student's question. In contrast, passive behavior includes talking with neighbors, sleeping, writing letters, and doodling.

Whether the behavior of the informants is active or passive is at least partially dependent on the organization of the class, and on the instructor's presentation of the material. The two categories of informant tend to respond actively in classes employing the three following techniques: lecture with discussion, discussion and team-teaching. The informants were more passive in the lecture situation especially if the class was large with a hundred or more students.

On two occasions, however, the informants displayed active behavior

in the lecture situation. The informants appeared to be interested in what the instructors were saying and to be earnestly taking notes. Some of the informants even stayed after class to talk with the instructor. Later, in an informal discussion with the investigator, the informants related the reasons for their behavior. As one resident (Sue) stated, "The topic in class today was so interesting. Also, I think the instructor presented the material in an interesting manner." Another resident (Liz) commented, "I wouldn't mind studying if all my classes were as interesting as history class was today, or if the instructor presented the material in an innovative manner."

The instructor's presentation is the second factor which influences student behavior. Several factors in the instructor's presentation tend to induce passive behavior. They are intolerance of questions, rapid delivery, and repetition of the text. For example, one resident informant (Dede) got very hostile toward instructors that would not permit questions until the end of the period because she felt this procedure usually results in little or no time for questions.

Thus, there are at least two factors--class organization and instructor's presentation--which determine whether students' behavior in class is active or passive. The behavior of any one student, however, varies from class to class and from instructor to instructor.

Regardless of whether the behavior is active or passive, students at Creighton attempt to give their instructors a favorable impression in the classroom. In other words, the informants want their instructors to think that they have studied hard and/or are interested in their courses. Therefore, according to the informants, one has given an instructor a

"favorable impression," if that instructor believes that he/she is a good student.

One technique for creating a favorable impression often mentioned by informants in this study, is that of appearing to take notes during the class when actually not doing so. In order to achieve this, the informants report that they write letters, write papers, or doodle. Needless to say, this is most successful in classes which were relatively large, that is, at least forty persons. The following is a case in point: One day when Pam was getting ready to go to history lecture, she said,

> Let's see what I can take to study. I can't keep up with the instructor, so why try to take notes. The last time I took notes in class, I had incomplete sentences and phrases. My notes were meaningless.

Several of the informants commented that they prefer that classes not be extremely small--less than ten--because they then have to be prepared and attentive, this being especially difficult if the class is boring. As one resident informant (Liz) noted,

> If the class is extremely small (less than ten students), you really have to make an effort not to look bored. Also, the chances are fairly good that you'll be called on to respond. I'd rather be in a class of forty any day than a class of five or ten.

Another resident informant (Irene) commented, "the bad thing about small classes is that if you are not prepared for some reason, the instructor will know it. You see, most small classes are organized on a discussion bases."

The norms of the informants do not support every kind of classroom behavior. For instance, student norms frown on sleeping in class because it is obvious to the instructor that one is not attentive. A student,

who falls asleep during class, is ridiculed by his/her peers.

If students perceive that an instructor is not familiar with what he is teaching or does not know all he should know, the students proceed to make things difficult for the instructor. For example, students will take an old paper and retype it with their name on it. One non-resident informant (Martha) lent one of her papers to a fellow student. Upon doing so she commented, "I don't like to do this sort of thing, but the teacher is so dumb he deserves it."

The modus operandi is the third element of the classroom environment. It refers to such things as seating assignments, the taking of roll, and the permitting of smoking and eating. The modus operandi of the class to a great extent can be used as an indicator of how formal or informal, or structured or unstructured the class is.

At Creighton, the taking of roll and the requiring of attendance (at least for the College of Arts and Science) is left to the discretion of each department. Some departments, such as education, require attendance and permit each student only three unexcused absences. Other departments, such as sociology, leave these decisions to the individual instructor. The informants felt that departments and instructors which required attendance were treating them as "babies." If an instructor requires attendance and the class is boring, both types of informant felt that the instructor knows that unless he requires attendance no one would come.

The permitting of smoking and eating in the classroom varies from instructor to instructor. However, smoking and eating is prohibited in certain buildings on campus. For instance, smoking is prohibited in the

administration building as a result of an order of the city fire department while eating is forbidden in the library.

Administrative Environment

The administrative environment is the third element in the total college environment. The administration at Creighton impinges on three areas of student life: academic work, student organizations, and personal relations. The extent of administrative control varies among the different aspect of student life. The informants feel that the administration exerts a great deal of control with regard to academic work.

The administration together with the faculty determine graduation requirements, both the prescribed courses and necessary quality point average. The administration also determines such things as the minimum quality point average necessary for a student to remain in the University and the courseload a student must carry each semester in order to graduate in four years. In other words, the administration determines, in the area of academic work, what students do and when they do it. The requirements, along with the rewards and punishments, are described in the University's catalog.

The terms of the requirements, as well as their successful completion are contained, for the most part, in the system of courses, examinations and grades.

The administration or faculty acting administratively at Creighton exerts less control on student organizations than it does in the area of academic work. It does require that all clubs and student organizations be chartered by the University. Also, all the meetings held by the

various student clubs and organizations must be registered with either the dean of men or the dean of women.

The administration indirectly exercises control in the area of personal relations in its attempts to regulate who resides in the four dormitories. The University requires that all single, undergraduate women from out of the city live in one of the three women's residence halls. The University also requires that all single males and pharmacy school freshmen reside in Swanson Hall (Creighton University Bulletin, 1971-1973:48-49). There is only one exception to this rule. Students may live off campus with married relatives provided they have the permission of their parents.

Despite the apparently stringent housing rule[1] it is relatively easy for a junior or senior to get University permission to live off-campus. What frequently happens is that a group of three or four students will invent relatives residing in the city and obtain permission from their parents to live off-campus. The University rarely--if ever--verifies the request, and permission is usually granted. The group of students then rents an apartment or house.

Disciplinary action is an area which is related to the administrative environment, and which may be considered an aspect of it since it is the administration that punishes students for misconduct. This aspect of the college environment encompasses the disciplinary consequences of potential violations, the extent and degree of actual viola-

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[1]These data were obtained from students who were not included in the major observational aspects of this thesis.

tion of regulations, the disciplinary consequences of poor academic work and students' perception of the extent and intensity of these disciplinary actions.

The Creighton University administration annually publishes the disciplinary consequences of potential violations in the Student Handbook. A student, who is accused of misconduct, is entitled to an advisor from the University community and a hearing before the University Committee on Student Discipline. The procedures of the committee hearing are delineated in the Student Handbook.

The disciplinary penalties "range from warning, fines and various degrees of disciplinary probation to requests of withdrawal, suspension, and expulsion" (Student Handbook, 1972-1973:13).

No violation of University regulations or misconduct of a student were brought to this observer's attention during either the spring of 1972 or the spring of 1973.

The disciplinary consequences of poor academic work are described in the Creighton University Bulletin. A student's academic status is based on his cumulative quality-point average. A student's quality-point average (QPA) is calculated each semester. The cumulative quality-point average is computed only on the work attempted at Creighton.

The Bulletin states that a student, whose cumulative quality-point average is below 2.00, will be placed on academic probation, and advised to drop all extracurricular activities (Creighton University Bulletin, 1971-1973:81). A freshman may be dropped for poor scholarship if his/her cumulative QPA is not at least 1.75 at the end of the freshman year. Any upperclass student whose cumulative QPA is below 2.00 may be dropped

for poor scholarship (Creighton University Bulletin, 1971-973:83).

During the formal interview which was administered at the end of the 1971-1972 academic year, the informants were asked "what are the disciplinary consequences of misconduct?" Though the consequences are published in the Student Handbook, not one of the informants was aware of the consequences of misconduct. One resident informant (Dede) attempted to explain her ignorance of the disciplinary consequences of misconduct. She said,

> I guess I'm not aware of the consequences, because I don't know anyone who has been accused of violating University regulations. (In response to one of the researcher's questions, she replied) Well, if the information is published in the Student Handbook that's news to me. You see, I only read those sections of the Handbook which seemed relevant at the time.

A non-resident student (Bridgette) expressed the same sentiment when she said, "I have no idea what they [the administration] might do to a student who, for instance, vandalized the student union. Of course, I don't know anyone who has been accused of such misconduct." Most of the other informants stated that they were unacquainted with the disciplinary consequences of misconduct for the same reasons.

All of the informants--both resident and non-resident--were aware of the disciplinary consequences of poor grades. Students are conscious of the disciplinary consequence of poor scholarship. It is a continuous threat to students for the duration of their college years. As one resident informant (Judy) stated, "if you don't get the grades, you more or less have had it." One non-resident informant (Jan) noted,

> If you don't pass a course, you may lose your [cumulative] QPA [that is, it may drop below 2.00] and possibly not graduate. Also, you may not be permitted to major in certain areas such as nursing.

In the foregoing paragraphs, it has been noted that the students are aware of the consequences of poor grades, but are virtually ignorant of the disciplinary consequences of other forms of misconduct. Perhaps this is because the consequences of misconduct are not a continuous threat to students as are the consequences of poor grades.

Peer Environment

A student influences other students as well as being influenced by other students on any American college campus. The peer environment influences every student on American college campuses and each student in turn influences the peer environment. Because the American college student both influences and is influenced by other students, the peer environment is the most important element of the college environment for the student. The central concern of this study is the peer environment in the context of the other elements of the college environment previously discussed, and the impact of the three other elements upon the peer environment are examined. The peer environment encompasses such phenomena as the frequency and types of dates, membership in campus organizations, and the extent and amount of students' time spent in various activities.

A date may be seen as a pre-arranged appointment made between a male and female to meet socially. In our society, a majority of the premarital relationships between male and female occur within the context of a date. It has become institutionalized in our society to such an extent that not only do accepted forms of behavior and expectations exist, but there has evolved three distinct types of date. Each type

involves an increased commitment "in interpersonal relationships" (Ehrmann, 1964:60). The three types are random dating, going steady, and being engaged. Furthermore, these three types of date or "intimacy relations are closely associated with the emotion of love in that usually only a few persons dating at random are in love, but many going steady are, and all engaged couples are expected to be, ..." Ehrmann, 1964:601).

According to Burchinal, the norms surrounding dating

> emanate from different and sometimes conflicting reference groups, particularly the parent-adult and the peer group; and, for individuals, dating norms change over time with greater dating experience and progressive commitment leading toward marriage (Burchinal, 1964:626).

Furthermore,

> dating behavior among youth at any given time represents the dynamic synthesis of previous experiences and the interplay of the influence of parental and other adult reference groups and peer reference groups (Burchinal, 1964:626).

A majority of both residential and non-residential informants are randomly dating. The only exceptions are two resident informants, and these two informants are both going steady.

The frequency of dates varies among the informants from once or twice a semester to three or four times a week. The resident informants, however, date more often than the non-resident informants and go on more varied types of dates because their norms stipulate that they date frequently--at least once a week. If a resident informant does not date at least once a week, she is subject to being shunned by her peers. Because they date frequently, the resident students find themselves going on many types of dates, and there are certain types of social functions such as

homecoming and fraternity formals that the resident informants are expected to attend.

Resident students, furthermore, develop norms with respect to who is an acceptable date and who is not. The most acceptable date is a fraternity man or a professional student--a student in one of the following schools: dentistry, law, medicine, or pharmacy. A basketball player is a less acceptable date. According to the resident informants, a date who is not a fraternity man, a professional student, or basketball player is considered unacceptable. It is thought that a girl who accepts a date with an unacceptable male is "hard-up." It is considered better to sit in the dormitory than accept a date from just anyone.

One resident informant (Rosemary) was caught on several occasions between the two sets of norms: One set that stresses dating at least once a week, and the other which stipulates who is an acceptable date. Rosemary, however, usually accepted the date, because the norm stipulating the frequency of dating carries a negative sanction--being shunned whereas the greatest retribution that any resident informant receives for dating a male labelled unacceptable is disapproval. Moreover, Rosemary found it easier to rationalize dating someone labelled unacceptable than to sit in her room in the dormitory. One day during a private conversation she remarked,

> If I go out with someone who is considered an unacceptable date, I can always say we're just friends. You see, even though you can't date just anyone, you can be friends with anyone. I suppose this is because one's dates are one's perspective marriage partners.

No norms regarding dating seem to have developed among the non-resident informants. The resident informants develop such norms because

they are subject to pressures from a more cohesive group. This is partly due to their residing in the same building which allows them to exert more influence upon one another's behavior than if they were to live at home. In other words, resident students have more opportunity to influence each other's attitudes and behaviors than non-resident students.

The typical date for both categories of informant is a movie or party. Other types of activity the informants engage in during a date are drinking, dinner, and occasionally dancing. Most of the resident and non-resident informants frequently go on studying dates. The customary place for this is the library. The amount of actual studying done on such dates varies with the couple and the academic calendar. In other words, if members of the couple are "just good friends" and not formally dating, more studying is done. Likewise, more studying is done at the times of mid-term and final examinations.

Several of the informants, particularly the non-residents, were not active in any campus-related activities. This is not because there is a lack of activities in which to join. The informants were not active in these organizations due to the lack of student norms stressing membership in campus organizations, as there are at Vassar and other Ivy League colleges (Bushnell, 1962, and Davie and Hare, 1956). The overall attitude of students at Creighton toward student government and student organizations can be described as apathetic. For instance, in the spring 1973 election of the Student Board of Governors, approximately 25% of the students voted (Alumnews IV (Spring), 1973:1).

Nine of the informants (seven resident and two non-resident) did

participate in campus organizations. Eight of the informants were active in one or the other of the sororities on campus. The other informant--a non-resident student--plays intramural baseball. It should be noted that the informants (seven resident and two non-resident), who were active in at least one student organization had been active in student organizations in high school. Also, these nine informants have a broader base of friends than do the informants that are not active in student organizations.

Another aspect of the peer environment is the extent and amount of students' time spent in various activities, such as rap sessions, studying, and supporting university athletics.

There are two types of "rap session" in which most students participate. These are rap sessions with other students and rap sessions with faculty members. The informants engage daily in several rap sessions with other students. Often these discussions include students who were not directly observed for the purposes of this research. The topics range from course work to "the lousy food" or one's latest date. Rap sessions with faculty members are less frequent and more limited in scope and may be weekly or biweekly while rap sessions with one's peers occur daily. During the rap sessions with faculty, the informants do not discuss matters such as their latest date or "the lousy food." These conversations generally center around such topics as courses, campus events, and job trends.

The study habits[1] of the informants vary. There is no pattern which distinguishes the non-resident informants from the resident informants. The study habits of the informants seem to vary on an individual basis. Those of any one informant are dependent on her major, her course load, and her aptitude. The informants, however, can be divided into two groups.[2] The members of one group study regularly and keep up with their assignments most of the time. Only occasionally, did these informants have to "cram." Students define "cramming" as the leaving of assignments, such as the writing of papers and the studying for examinations until very near the time they are due. The other group leaves their assignments to the last minute. Now and then, these persons hand in a late paper.

Just as the study habits of the informants vary, so does their support of athletic events, two types of which a student at Creighton can support. They are intermural and intramural. Intermural sports are those in which a team from one school competes with a team from a different school, while intramural sports are those in which several teams emerge at one school and these teams compete with one another. For example, Creighton's basketball team competes with other college teams throughout the nation, and thus, basketball is an intermural sport. In contrast, each fraternity at Creighton has its own soccer team and these teams compete with one another. Competition of this type between

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[1]The study habits of the informants along with other aspects of academic work will be discussed in detail in Chapters V and VI.

[2]See Davie and Hare, 1956, for similar findings.

fraternities is known as intramural sports.

Of the three intermural sports--basketball, baseball, and rugby--only basketball and rugby are supported by the informants. There are two reasons that baseball did not receive similar support by the informants. First, none of the informants personally knew any of the baseball team members. The two informants who regularly supported the basketball team were "good friends" of two of the team players. Second, baseball season begins late in the academic year when most students are writing papers and studying for final exams.

All of the informants--both resident and non-resident--supported intramural sport events. Some of the informants, particularly those belonging to sororities, were members of intramural teams. Other informants attended the events and cheered for their favorite teams.

In the foregoing paragraphs, the investigator has noted the ways in which the resident and non-resident informants differ with regard to the frequency and types of date, memberships in campus organizations, and the extent and amount of time spent in various activities. The resident informants date more frequently and are more apt to be active in student organizations than the non-resident informants. The amount of time informants spend in various activities is dependent upon the activity.

In this chapter the elements in the college environment that impinge on students attending Creighton University have been analyzed.

The physical environment has been described briefly as it is in this context that most students interact. The classroom environment was examined in terms of instructor's behavior, student's behavior and modus operandi of the class. It was noted that student preference for various

teaching techniques is largely dependent upon individual student needs and previous classroom experiences. Student's behavior in class is dependent on the organization of the class, and on the instructor's presentation of the material. The modus operandi of the class, for the most part, was left to the discretion of the individual instructor. The extent of administrative control over student behavior was found to vary with the different aspects of student life. Finally, in describing the peer environment the investigator focused attention on the ways in which the two categories of informant--resident and non-resident--differ with respect to the frequency and type of dates, membership in campus organizations, and the extent and amount of time spent in various activities. The significance of the peer environment to this study was noted.

The present chapter was concerned with the elements in the college environment. It was noted that the peer environment was only one element, and the following chapter deals solely with the peer environment. It is concerned with the functions and dysfunctions of the peer group as a reference group.

CHAPTER V

FUNCTIONS OF PEER GROUPS IN A UNIVERSITY SETTING

> Potential peer group members are many, but their number is effectively reduced by the requirement that people must be relatively compatible in terms of background, interests, and attitudes: what they have to say and what they want to listen to must be of common interest (Gans, 1962:76).

This chapter deals with the functions and dysfunctions of reference groups. It will be useful to review concepts discussed previously in Chapter II. A peer group is one type of reference group. A reference group has been defined as any group or category of social actors with whom the individual, regardless of whether he is a member or not, compares and contrasts his goals, values, attitudes, beliefs, and self-conceptions. Merton notes that

> the concept of reference 'group' can be seen to include, in undifferentiated fashion, social formations of different kinds: membership and non-membership groups, collectivities, and social categories (Merton, 1962:300).

For instance,

> when operating as groups, members of the same social category can be thought of as <u>peer groups</u> or companies of equals (although the usage has developed of confining the term peer group to groups whose members are of equal age) (Merton, 1962: 300).

Since an individual may compare and contrast his conceptions of self, his goals, his attitudes, his values and his behavior with that of any group, every group is a potential reference group, regardless of whether it is a membership group or not. It is for this reason that an individual has several reference groups, some sequentially in the course of a life time. The fact that individuals often have multiple reference

groups is basic to reference group theory.

This chapter deals with the functions and dysfunctions of peer groups for college students, and the consequences of the peer groups upon student life. In American society, peer groups become important to the individual at puberty and continue in importance at least through adolescence. For most adolescences as well as for many college students, the peer group is a positive reference group. This study, as has been clear, is concerned only with one of several reference groups to which a college student may refer. The peer group plays an important role for the student within the college environment, and its impact upon college students will be analyzed within the framework of reference group theory.

According to reference group theory, there are two types of reference group, each performing a different function for the individual. The first is the normative type. The normative reference group serves as a source of values for the individual, and is in a position, either positively or negatively, to sanction an individual's behavior. The comparative reference group is the second type. Here the individual employs the "standards of other individuals and groups as a comparative frame of reference" (Merton, 1962:234). The individual uses this type of reference group as a means of evaluating his relative position and the position of others in a given situation. The groups the individual uses as comparative frames of reference may be either membership or non-membership groups.

Thus, the concept of comparative reference group has two functions. First, it points out that one's membership group and reference group are

not always synonymous. Second, it attempts to explain why the attitudes and behavior of the individual may not coincide with those of one's membership group. It is important to note that the two types of reference groups, normative and comparative, are not always empirically distinct. Thus, one group may perform both functions for the individual; namely, it may serve as a source of attitudes and values as well as providing a comparative frame of reference. In the present study, the peer group was observed to have performed both functions for a number of informants.

Merton (1962) raises an important question:

> Under which conditions are associates within one's own groups taken as a frame of reference for self-evaluation and attitude-formation, and under which conditions do out-groups or non-membership groups provide the significant frame of reference (Merton, 1962:233)?

The question which Merton asks is of central importance to this study because it is concerned with the situations in which the peer group, rather than other groups, functions as a frame of reference for college students in the college environment. Other groups, for example, that are potential reference groups for college students are faculty, administrators, parents, siblings, and fellow employees.

Formation of Peer Groups

Before discussing the situations in which the peer group functions as a reference group, it is important to note the manner in which peer groups are formed. "Even in very small colleges, not every one associates with equal frequency or with equal intensity with all his peers" (Newcomb, 1962:473). Thus, "roughly equal status" is a necessary but

not a sufficient cause for peer-group formation. There are many bases for peer-group formation "ranging from chance propinquity through more or less casual common interest to shared concerns of great moment" (Newcomb, 1962:473).

There are at least three factors which contribute to the formation of peer groups. The first is precollege acquaintanceship. Precollege acquaintance may serve as the basis for peer group formation in early college experience. It is probable that many precollege acquaintances

> are superseded by other developed in college with previously unknown persons. In presumably rare cases they do persist through a significant proportion of the college years, it seems more likely that they re-enforce existing attitudes and values of the individuals involved than that they mediate new ones acquired through college experience (Newcomb, 1962:474).

Another factor is propinquity. There are two aspects of propinquity. The first refers to the probability of two people ever meeting. Thus, it is less likely that a freshman at Creighton and a freshman at the University of Nebraska will meet than two Creighton freshmen. The second aspect is the probability of interpersonal contact. Two students, who reside on the same dormitory floor, are more apt to have interpersonal contact than if they lived in two separate dormitories; as are two students taking the same course. ". . . , other things equal, [an individual] is most apt to maintain close relationships with those with whom he first develops them [as determined in part by propinquity]" (Newcomb, 1962:476).

Similarity of attitudes and values is the third factor that contributes to peer group formation. People are more likely to interact when they are brought together by a shared interest, and are more apt to

develop close relationships when they have a shared interest.

These last two factors--contiguity and common interest--"together would seem to account for the beginning of most peer-group-relationships" (Newcomb, 1962:476).

In this study, all three factors--precollege acquaintanceship, propinquity, and similarity of attitudes and values--were seen to contribute to the formation of the observed peer groups. Some of the non-resident informants were acquainted prior to attending Creighton. Even though these informants had attended the same high school, they did not become "good" friends until they came to Creighton. In other words, their friendship was reinforced by their freshmen college experiences.

All the non-resident informants had shared at least one class together during the first semester of their freshmen year. The resident informants had all lived in Delgman Hall their freshmen year, and during their sophomore year they all lived on the same floor of Kiewit Hall. However, precollege acquaintance and propinquity were not sufficient reasons for peer group formation. Not all the non-resident students who take a certain course together form a peer group. Nor do all students who reside in the same dormitory. Though precollege acquaintance and propinquity brought the informants together, continued interaction was the result of these students having similar attitudes, interests, and values.

Occasionally, friendships ended or shifted as interest shifted. For instance, one non-resident informant (Pam) was acquainted with one of the resident informants (Dede) during the 1971-1972 academic year. This particular resident student was non-resident the first semester of

her freshman year. After Dede moved into Delgmen Hall, Pam and Dede still got together. This was partly because of propinquity, as Delgman Hall is on the east end of campus as is the main student union. During their sophomore year, Pam and Dede hardly ever saw each other as Dede lived in Kiewit Hall, which is on the west end of campus. However, the termination of their friendship was also due to a shift of interest on the part of Dede. After she moved into the dormitory, her attitudes and interests gradually shifted to that of her resident peers. For example, Dede became more concerned with getting dates to special functions and with finding dates labelled acceptable by her new group of peers. Also, she dated more frequently after moving into Delgman Hall.

In the preceding paragraphs, the factors that contribute to peer group formation were discussed. The following section of this chapter will focus on the situations in which the peer group functions as a reference group.

Peer Group as a Reference Group

The peer group functions as a reference group in three areas of student life for the observed students at Creighton. The three areas of student life are: academic work, student organizations and personal relations.[1]

Of the three areas, the academic is the most pervasive. Every student on Creighton's campus is subject to the University's regulations concerning courses, grades, and credits. Different students, however,

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[1]Becker et al. (1968) categorized college life in this manner.

are affected differently by these regulations. Some students, for one reason or another, find it easier to meet these requirements. Yet, all students are affected by the University's regulations governing academic work.

The academic realm of college life refers to study habits and class attendance. As indicated in Chapter IV, page 63, the informants can be divided into two groups on the basis of their study habits. The first group studies regularly, while the second leaves assignments until "the last minute." The study habits were dependent upon the informant's major, course load, and aptitude. Even though one's study habits were viewed as an individual trait, student norms exist which stipulate appropriate behavior. First, there are norms governing the proper course load. Fifteen to eighteen hours is considered an average course load by both the administration and the students. According to the resident and non-resident informants, it is not uncommon to find students taking twenty or twenty-one hours. Informants--both resident and non-resident--consider a student who takes less than fifteen hours lazy. Such a student is perceived to have no right to complain about the amount of course work. In other words, such a student should not be complaining about the amount of reading she has to do or the papers she has to write nor the difficulty of the exams she takes.

Because a majority of the informants--both resident and non-resident--were taking between sixteen to eighteen hours of solid courses,[1]

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[1]Courses which are not considered solids by the informants are art, music, drama, speech and physical education.

the informants believe it is impossible to keep up with assignments. Therefore, one was expected to cram for an exam or to write a paper only immediately upon its being due, a second norm governing academic behavior. A student, who continually kept up with assignments and did not cram for an exam, was regarded as a potential curve breaker. One non-resident informant (Martha), who found college easy and worked sixteen hours a week, managed to stay abreast of her course work. One day in a private conversation with me, Martha said,

> I really don't cram for exams like the others [her peers] think, and I usually have my papers pretty much finished the day before they are due. But if the others knew this, especially since I get good grades, I would be called a "curve breaker." So I just fake it that I wait until the last minute.

Martha's statement was affirmed by her behavior. For example, one morning prior to a history exam, Martha was asked to play bridge. She replied, "Well, I don't know I have a history test at noon. I think, I had better study." Whereupon, Martha left the student union.

The number of hours the informants studied per week ranged from eight to twenty-five, with most of them studying twelve to fifteen hours. The informants--both resident and non-resident--were expected to, and did spend less time studying if they did not have a paper, a report, or an exam in a particular week.

The informants were aware that the number of hours studied are not always proportional to the grade they receive. The following instance is illustrative: One day in the spring of 1972, Martha and Bridgette were comparing their spring semester study habits to those of the previous semester, and the grades they were getting. Bridgette related that she was studying harder this semester and that "I'm not getting as good

grades as I did last semester." Martha said, "I studied harder last semester and am getting better grades this semester." Neither could explain why their grades were not proportional to the number of hours they studied. What the two non-resident informants overlooked was the factor of course difficulty. For instance, Bridgette was taking more solid or core courses that semester than she had taken the previous semester. In other words, two factors contribute to one's grades: number of hours studied and one's course load, which includes the "difficulty" of courses.

A second aspect of the academic area of college life which this study examines is class attendance. The informants viewed the cutting of classes as an individual matter, as they did study habits. The informants noted that one's attendance in class is contingent upon several factors. The first is the instructor's attendance requirement. As noted in Chapter IV, page 53, class attendance requirements vary from department to department, and from instructor to instructor. The second factor is the pressure of assignments in certain courses which necessitates the cutting of classes in other courses. The informants frequently cut several of their courses in order to meet a deadline for a term paper, a long term project, or study for a big exam.[1]

It was observed that most of the informants frequently did not like to cut classes. As one resident informant (Nancy) said, " I don't cut classes too often. It isn't worth it, because it's too hard to get

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[1]Davie and Hare (1956) note that their informants cut class to meet assignment deadlines. Their informants also cut class, because of the pressure of outside activities.

caught up." One non-resident informant (Ann) commented, "I hardly ever cut classes. For one thing, most classes are too important to miss. Also, it is a lot more work to catch up in a course, than it is to go to class."

It is worth noting that no matter how frequently an informant cut class, she always rationalized the act and kept a record of the number of cuts she had in each course. The informants kept a careful count of the number of cuts they had in each class, because too many cuts could mean a drop in their letter grades. The informants were perpetually aware that a drop in their letter grade could mean a drop in their cumulative QPA which in turn, could effect their chances of graduating or their opportunity to attend graduate school.

To summarize: Informants develop norms regarding the course load and cramming for exams. Group expectations evolved regarding the number of hours one is expected to study but no peer norms are created with respect to class attendance.

Student organizations constitute the second area of college life in which the peer group functions as a reference group. In Chapter IV, pages 61-62, it was noted that the resident informants developed norms stressing membership in student organizations. Apparently, no set of norms stressing participation in student organizations developed among the non-resident informants. One reason for the lack of such norms is the belief among several of the non-resident informants that student activities interfere with academic work. Some of these informants did not participate in student organizations, because they worked and claimed they had no time for extracurricular activities. It was observed that

these informants did not join student organizations, because most, if not all, of their college friends did not belong to student organizations. In other words, in the absence of norms stressing membership and pressure from one's peers, a majority of the non-resident informants did not feel a need to belong to a student organization.

Of course there were exceptions. For instance, one non-resident informant (Pam), who worked part-time, belonged to a sorority. This informant's sorority sisters, rather than the other non-resident informants, served as a reference group for her.

Another exception was Ann, who was also a non-resident informant. Though she played intramural baseball, none of her friends did but she had played during her high school years. Thus, intramural baseball was not the development of a new interest, but the continuation of an old one.

The third area of college life in which the peer group functions as a reference group is in personal relations which in this context refers to dating and friendship. The administration at Creighton, according to administrators and students, expends little energy in the supervision of personal relations. The students, therefore, are free to develop the patterns of personal relations that they desire.

As noted in Chapter IV, pages 59-61, the resident informants develop norms with respect to dating, while the non-resident informants do not. The apparent difference between the resident and non-resident informants can be explained by two factors. First, the resident and non-resident informants define college life differently. The non-resident informants define college life as the taking of courses, study-

ing for the courses and passing them. The resident informants have a broader definition of college life. Their definition includes going to parties, particularly fraternity and professional parties, participating in homecoming and other formal activities and intramural events.

The second factor that explains differences between the resident and non-resident informants is place of residence. All the resident informants reside in the same dormitory and could, therefore, closely survey one another's behavior. In other words, because of their close proximity to one another, they could sanction certain aspects of personal relations. The non-resident informants could not as easily sanction behavior in the area of personal relations, since most dates and friendships were off-campus.[1]

In the foregoing paragraphs, the situations in which the peer group functions as a reference group for college students were discussed. It was noted that the peer group functions as a reference group for the non-resident informants only in the area of academic work. In contrast, the peer group functions as a reference group for the resident informants in all three areas of student life: academic work, student organizations, and personal relations. The following paragraphs will discuss the circumstances in which a non-membership group functions as a reference group.

Non-membership Group as a Reference Group

The question is posited: When does a college student employ a non-membership group as reference for self-evaluation and/or attitude

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[1] See Chapter VI for a discussion of informants' best friends.

formation. In attempting to answer this question, Merton and Kitt's concept of anticipatory socialization is useful. By anticipatory socialization is meant that an individual adopts what he perceives to be the attitudes and values of a group prior to becoming a member of that group. The adaptation by an individual of what he perceives to be the attitudes and values of a non-membership group does not guarantee him of membership in that group. Also, it is important to note that an individual socializes himself to what he perceives to be the norms of a group, and therefore, may internalize some attitudes which in fact are not held by members of the group to which he aspires.

The concept of anticipatory socialization is important to this study because students typically experience a certain amount of anticipatory socialization as they prepare for careers especially in their junior and senior years of college. The informants who were sophomores in the spring of 1973 began experiencing anticipatory socialization as they began to prepare seriously for careers in the major fields they had selected.

The process began toward the end of their sophomore year when students are required to declare a major. Upon declaring their majors, the informants began to modify their behavior in the area of academic work. For instance, it was observed that they engaged in rap sessions with faculty members more frequently after declaring majors. The conversations and discussions were for the most part with the faculty members who were in the field the student had selected as her major. Often these sessions focused on the possible careers in a particular field and on what was the "best" preparation for them. The informants

were aware of the importance of the discussions with faculty members in their field. For example, one non-resident (Ann) commented,

> You really can't evaluate your department or their offerings until you get to know the teachers [in that field]. You can't acquire general knowledge about your field until you are acquainted with the faculty here, unless you already know someone in that area.

One resident informant (Dede) stated,

> If you don't know the teachers in your field, you're in a bind. Teachers can do a lot to aid you in your career. For instance, they help you get the best preparation possible, or they can help you get into graduate school, or they might know where you can get a job.

As the informants spent more time with instructors, their outlook toward academic work was somewhat modified. For example, their criteria for course selection changed. No longer did they select courses solely on the basis of difficulty or because of schedule preference. The informants also took into account the instructor and the importance of the course to their career plans.

Returning to the question at hand, the informants employed non-membership groups as references for self-evaluation and/or attitude formation when they began to prepare for careers. The non-membership reference group consisted of instructors in the informants' particular fields. It is suggested that this non-membership reference group will become more important as the informants approach graduation.

Other Relevant Concepts

There are several other concepts, besides anticipatory socialization, that are related to reference group theory, and which may in fact be viewed as concepts in reference group theory. One of these is

relative deprivation. Relative deprivation may be defined as

> deprivation or disadvantages measured not by objective standards but by comparison with the relatively superior advantages of others, such as members of a reference group who one desires to emulate (Theodorson and Theodorson, 2969:343).

Merton (1962) suggests that relative deprivation can "account for the observed definitions of the situation" (Merton, 1962:237). In other words, the concept of relative deprivation can aid social scientists in understanding why or when individuals can define the situation in the way that they do.

The concept of relative deprivation is relevant to this study in the following way: A student does not study very hard and gets "B's." Her friend, on the other hand, studies very hard and barely gets "C's." The second student feels relatively disadvantaged. A student may also feel deprived or disadvantaged if she has to work in order to pay for her education while her friends do not.

One non-resident informant (Mary Alice) felt disadvantaged when she compared herself to her peers because she studied harder for lesser grades than her friends. However, if a student feels disadvantaged in one area in comparison to her peers, it does not necessarily mean she feels disadvantaged in other areas. Thus, though Mary Alice felt deprived in the area of academic work, she did not feel deprived in other areas such as economic status.

Another non-resident informant, who experienced relative deprivation, was Bridgette. Bridgette, who is a good friend of Mary Alice, had to pay her own tuition, while Mary Alice did not. Bridgette, therefore, felt economically disadvantaged, but not academically deprived.

It should be mentioned that Mary Alice and Bridgette were not the

only informants that felt deprived, nor were the non-resident informants the only ones that experienced relative deprivation. Two resident informants also experienced relative deprivation. Rosemary felt deprived in two areas. The first area is personal relations. As noted in Chapter IV, Rosemary had difficulty acquiring dates with males who were labelled acceptable by the others. Rosemary also felt economically disadvantaged, because she could not afford to join a sorority since most of her friends belonged to one or the other of the six sororities on campus. Another resident, Kay, felt academically disadvantaged as did Mary Alice.

The definition of the situation is another concept which can be related to reference group theory. Two individuals will define the same situation in a similar way only if they have the same attitudes and share similar experiences. Thus, an individual's definition of the situation will be influenced by his reference groups. An example is the view held by several of the non-resident informants that student activities interfer with academic work. This more or less collective definition of the situation resulted in only a few of the non-resident informants participating in student organization.

The significant other is still another concept which is related to the concept of reference groups. A significant other is an individual who has great influence on the individual's evaluation of himself. Generally, the term significant other refers to a single individual who is important to another. In contrast, George H. Mead's concept of generalized other refers to significant others or groups such as reference groups. The significant other usually refers to someone whose attitudes, values, beliefs, and opinions are important to an individual,

but who is not a member of the individual's reference groups. For instance, Eileen's two "best" friends do not attend Creighton. These individuals would be considered significant others to Eileen, since they are not members of her peer groups of association.

In this chapter, the impact of the peer group upon college students was examined within the framework of reference group theory. The factors which contribute to the formation of peer groups were delineated, as were the situations in which the peer group functions as a reference group for the informants. Several concepts, which are related to reference group theory and are relevant to this study, were noted. The following chapter deals with the impact of peer groups upon the emergence of student subcultures.

CHAPTER VI

THE EMERGENCE OF STUDENT SUBCULTURES ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS

> By the term, student culture, we mean a whole body of conceptions and images of problems and situations and of proper and justifiable solutions of them arrived at by the students; in part passed along from one generation of students to another, in part apparently rediscovered--or at least re-enforced--by each succeeding generation as they pass through the same experiences (Hughes et al., 1962:518).

This chapter is concerned with the extent to which peer groups influence the emergence of student subcultures. As stated in Chapter I, page 1, studies of student subcultures enable one to better understand the culture of that society because such studies enable one to identify and recognize the different elements of the general culture of a society.[1]

Student culture affects the larger social system in which it is embedded. It does so in at least two ways. First, it sets the tone for faculty-student relations. Second, it affects the level and direction of student effort in the area of academic achievement. However, student subcultures are part of a larger overall college culture, in which faculty, administrators and students participate (Sanford, 1962:58), and each college culture is unique. Thus, student subcultures determine the character of the college culture as well as being determined by it. Student subcultures, therefore, represent the collective responses of students to the situations in which they find themselves (Becker et al.,

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[1] In this study, the concept subculture will be used to refer to "the normative system of groups smaller than a society" (Yinger, 1960: 626).

1968 and Sanford, 1962). In other words, they develop subcultures as a result of evaluating their position within the college environment. In developing a subculture, students employ different groups as points of reference.

It may be suggested, therefore, that more than one student subculture develops as a result of identification with different reference groups. Thus, it is implied that the two categories of informant--resident and non-resident--will develop different attitudes and perceive phenomena in different ways. This chapter will emphasize the ways in which the two categories of student differ in such things as language, values and life styles. Certain of the characteristics of the two categories of informant have been noted in previous chapters.

The observed differences between the resident and non-resident informants have been shown to be due to different definitions of college life. As suggested in Chapter V, page 76, the non-resident informants have a narrower definition of college life than do the resident informants. This different perception of the college life, in large measure, accounts for the emergence of the two subcultures. The non-resident informants define college life as the enrollment in courses, studying for the courses, and passing them, and eventually attaining a degree. Hence, the non-resident informants define college life almost exclusively in terms of academic work. The resident informants' definition of college life encompasses that of the non-resident plus an active social life. In other words, the resident informants believe that going to parties, homecoming, and other social events is just as much a part of college life as academic work.

"Students who live at home, or in boarding houses, clearly inhabit a different social world from that of the 'dorm' student" (Hartshorne, 1943:322). The different social worlds of the two categories of informant partly explain their different definitions of college life. On the basis of their respective collective definitions of the situation, the resident and non-resident informants develop differing norms which enable them to cope with the college environment.

The informants' differing perceptions of college life influence their collective definition of it, and from their two definitions, they develop norms which aid them in coping with their environment. Thus, because the non-resident informants define college life in terms of academic work, they develop norms in that area. The resident informants, however, perceive college life to include student organizations and personal relations in addition to academic work. Therefore, the resident informants develop norms in the areas of academic work, student organizations, and personal relations.

Academic Work

As noted in Chapter V, pages 72-73, both categories of informant develop norms regarding the appropriate course load and the cramming for exams. It was observed that non-resident informants, however, place more emphasis on academic work and tolerate less deviation from these norms than do resident informants. In other words, non-residents are more apt to reprimand one of their members for not abiding by the norms regulating academic work.

The following is illustrative: One day the non-residents

discovered that Jan had began studying for a biology mid-term exam three weeks in advance. Jan had violated the norm which stipulates that one cram for exams. Jan's peers reacted by shunning her until the biology grades were posted. Not only was Jan shunned, but she was also labelled a "curve breaker," because she was the only one among her peer associates that received an "A" on the exam.

Furthermore, the non-resident informants have a higher expectation regarding what is an acceptable quality point average (QPA). A "C" is not considered adequate. For instance, Meg had a "C" cumulative QPA, and was considered a "goof-off" and lazy by the other non-resident informants. A "B-" is considered an adequate cumulative QPA. A "C" is thought to be an adequate course grade for required courses, such as history and English; while a "B" is an adequate grade for course work in one's major.

The resident informants, on the other hand, believe "C" to be an adequate cumulative QPA. Like the non-resident informants, the residents expect one to get better marks in one's area of major, although they consider "C+" rather than "B" an adequate mark. Although the resident informants have somewhat lower academic expectations than the non-resident informants, the resident informants believe that there is more to college life than grades, as the following comment by Dede illustrates:

> I'm just as concerned about courses and my QPA as anyone, but there is more to college life than just studying. I have seen too many straight 'A' students who can't communicate or get along with other people. All these students do is study. Part of getting an education is meeting people and learning from them. Maybe my grades aren't that great, but I can communicate and get along with others which is necessary in today's world.

An indicator of students' involvement in the area of academic work which has not yet been mentioned is the type of unassigned scholarly books students read. A scholarly book may be defined as any book which is factual in nature and from which knowledge can be gleaned. In other words, the word scholarly is used in its broadest sense. The definition excludes these works which are basically mysteries, such as Agatha Christie novels, and other works of light fiction.

Data regarding this indicator were obtained during the formal interviews. The data reveal that the majority of the resident and non-resident informants had read at least two unassigned scholarly books. The kinds of books read varies from politically related books about the government to historical books dealing with the works of Jean Jacques Rousseau. The works of individuals such as Ferhlingetti and B. F. Skinner are included in the range of books the informants read.

From these data one can conclude that students read more than text books. If students become "caught up" with an idea, a historical period, or other phenomenon, they will probably do some non-assigned reading on the topic. In other words, if an idea excites them, they will do independent reading about it.

Another indicator of students' involvement in academic work is the kinds of magazines they read. Students who are more involved in the academic area of college life are more likely to read scholarly or professional journals than are students who are more concerned with other aspects of college life. For example, only an undergraduate student who is involved in the world of ideas is apt to read unassigned articles in journals such as the <u>American Sociological Review</u>.

Both the resident and non-resident informants make a distinction between studying and reading. The following statement by a non-resident informant (Ann) discriminates between studying and reading:

> I do a lot of reading especially in my English course, American novels, but I really don't spend that much time studying. (In response to one of the researcher's questions, the informant replied.) By studying, I mean studying for exams and writing papers.

One resident informant (Kay) noted that

> It seems like there is more reading and less studying in college than there was in high school. In high school we had a lot of 'busy work' assignments, but I have had only one instructor here [at Creighton] that assigned 'busy work.'

Student Organizations

As noted in Chapter IV, pages 61-62, and Chapter V, pages 75-76, one category of informant--resident--was more involved in student organizations than the other. All of the resident informants, except one (Rosemary),[1] were members of sororities. The residents contend that the sorority system at Creighton provides the most extensive method for meeting fellow students, male and female. Furthermore, membership in a sorority assures the resident informants of an active social life which they believe to be an important part of college life. For instance, a sorority and fraternity together traditionally engage in a homecoming project. Also, membership in a sorority provides the resident informants

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[1]Rosemary did not join a sorority, because of lack of finances. In fact, she did not return to Creighton in the fall of 1972, for economic reasons.

with many potentially acceptable dates.[1]

In contrast, none of the non-resident informants, save two (Ann and Pam), actively participate in any of the student organizations. Ann is a member of an intramural basketball team, while Pam is a member of a sorority.

There seems to be two reasons for the lack of participation by the non-resident informants. First, the non-resident informants emphasize the academic aspect of college life almost to the exclusion of the other aspects. In other words, the non-resident informants perceive student organizations as an obstacle to academic work because it is assumed that student organizations demand both time and energy which should be spent studying. One non-resident informant (Eileen) expressed this attitude when she stated, "Tuition is so high that I feel I should spend as much time studying as possible in order to get the most for my money. Frequently, the activities of the student organizations interfere with the academic calendar." Meg--an associate of Eileen--commented, "I'm here to get an education. I don't have the time to run around during the week or to go to a lot of meetings."

A second reason for the lack of non-resident involvement in student organizations is that many of the non-resident informants hold part-time jobs, while only one resident informant (Sue) does. A few of the non-resident informants who work do so in order to help pay tuition. Some

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[1] As noted in Chapter IV, page 60, the resident informants develop norms regarding who is an acceptable date. The most acceptable date is a fraternity man or a student in one of the professional schools with a basketball player being a somewhat less acceptable date.

of the non-resident informants hold jobs which are related to their major. An example is Martha whose major is psychology. She works with retarded children. Another example is Meg, who is majoring in elementary education, serves as a tutor for several third-and fourth-grade students. Still other non-resident informants have part-time jobs, because it gives them an extra income. The one resident informant (Sue), who works, does so in order to pay her room and board.

The resident informants, for the most part, do not have part-time jobs essentially for two reasons. First, as one of them (Nancy) noted, "When you don't have regular access to a car, it is a real hassle getting to and from work. It just isn't worth it unless you get a job on campus, and those jobs are scarce."

Second, a part-time job is a potential interference with one's social life. Several of the resident informants note this drawback of a part-time job. The following comment by Kay is typical: "A job can really interfere with one's social life. For instance, I know of a couple of guys who couldn't get off work to go to homecoming." Another resident informant (Judy) commented, "A lot of parties and other activities are spontaneous, and if you work, you miss out."

Personal Relations

It was previously noted in Chapter V, pages 76-77, that the non-resident informants do not develop norms governing personal relations, while the resident informants do. Two possible reasons for the absence of such norms among the non-residents have been suggested. First, they can not as readily sanction behavior in the area of personal relations

as residents can because they lack the opportunity to observe systematically each other's off-campus behavior. Second, the non-resident informants' definition of college life omits the area of personal relations.

It was also observed that very few of the non-resident informants refer to other non-resident students with which they associate as "best" friends, while the resident informant frequently refers to other resident informants as "best" friends. In other words, the "best" friends of many of the non-resident informants do not attend Creighton. In contrast, residents, more often than not, refer to their roommates as their "best" friends. The explanation for this is simple. The non-resident informants continue many friendships which had emerged during high school. The resident informants, however, discontinue most of their associations with high school friends upon entering college. College experience during their freshmen year becomes the basis for their friendships.

Furthermore, it was observed that the resident informants are more concerned about their dress and general appearances. This does not mean that the non-resident are "sloppy" dressers or unconcerned about their appearances but that no group expectations stressing appropriate attire emerged among the non-residents. The fact that resident informants develop norms governing proper attire is reinforced by the amount of "fussing" they make over their hair and attire between classes. They also are more apt to have the latest hair style and experiment with the latest in cosmetics than the non-resident informants.

In the preceding paragraphs, it has been noted that resident

informants develop norms governing personal relations in University life while the non-resident informants tend not to do so. It was also noted that only a few of the non-resident informants refer to other non-resident students with which they associate as "best" friends, while the resident informants frequently refer to their roommates as their "best" friends. Furthermore, it has been noted that the residents are more concerned about their dress and general appearance than the non-residents.

This chapter has examined the impact of peer groups upon the emergence and differences between two student subcultures. It has been noted that the two categories of informant--resident and non-resident--develop different subcultures, different attitudes, and perceive phenomena in different ways. It was further noted that the subcultures arose as differing collective responses to the college environment and varying participation in it. Two distinct subcultures tend to emerge because the two peer groups have different social worlds and define college life differently. The values and life style of resident and non-resident informants have been discussed.

In this and the proceeding chapters, the investigator has described the college environment at a midwestern university. She has placed emphasis on the peer environment in the total college environment. Also, she has examined the formation of peer groups as reference groups on a college campus. Furthermore, she has noted the functions of peer groups for college students. Finally, she has examined the impact of peer groups upon the emergence and the difference between two student subcultures. In the following chapter, the investigator will recapituate the significant observations and conclusions of this study.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The primary concern of this thesis has been the impact of student peer groups upon the emergence of student subcultures. In attempting to discover the manner in which various peer groups influence student subcultures, the study has dealt with two related issues. The first concerned the situations in which the peer group, in contrast to other groups, functions as a frame of reference for college students in the college environment. The second related topic was the ways in which the resident and non-resident informants differ in such things as language, values, and life styles.

Peer Group as a Reference Group

It has been observed that the peer group functions as a reference group in three areas of student life: academic work, student organizations, and personal relations. In the area of academic work, the resident and non-resident informants develop norms regarding the appropriate course load and the cramming for exams. The appropriate course load is between fifteen to eighteen hours per semester. A student, who registers for less than fifteen hours, is considered lazy. The informants believe study habits to be an individual matter. However, because of the amount of reading and studying required when taking fifteen to eighteen hours of course work, they believe that it is impossible to keep up with one's assignments. Therefore, resident and non-resident informants develop norms stating that one is expected to cram for exams and write papers only just before they are due. They

also develop expectations stipulating the number of hours per week one is to study. Thus, most of the informants studied between twelve to fifteen hours per week.

The resident and non-resident informants have not been shown to develop norms respecting class attendance. The peer group is not in a position to govern all behavior in the area of academic work because of intervening factors such as the instructor's class attendance requirements.

The second area of college life in which the peer group functions as a reference group is that of student organizations. In the foregoing chapters, it was noted that there is no student norms stressing membership in student organizations, as there are reported to be at Ivy League colleges. However, most of the resident informants are active in student organizations while only two of the non-resident informants participate. It is to be noted that resident informants, who are active in student organizations joined sororities do so for two reasons: First, they believe that membership in a sorority provides them with numerous opportunities to meet fellow students. Second, they believe that membership in sororities ensures them of an active social life which they believe to be an essential part of college life. Since sororities and fraternities at Creighton traditionally have projects with each other, sorority membership provides the resident informants with many potentially acceptable dates.

The non-resident informants, in contrast, are not as determined to make new acquaintance as the resident informants. Most of the non-resident informants maintain contact with high school friends. Perhaps,

if the non-resident informants were to attend college outside of the city, high school friendships would have been superseded by friendships formed through shared college experiences.

Besides not being as interested in making new acquaintances as the resident informants, the non-resident informants as a whole do not participate in student organizations for the following reasons: First, the non-resident informants' definition of college life emphasizes academic work almost to the exclusion of the other two aspects of college life. Second, many of the non-resident informants, since they hold part-time jobs, do not have the time to devote to student organizations. Finally, several of the non-resident informants do not participate, because they do not feel a need to participate. The lack of desire to participate is in part due to the absence of student norms stressing the importance of membership and the lack of pressure from one's peers to join.

Personal relations--the area of dating and friendship--is a third area of college life in which the peer group functions as a reference group. It was observed that two factors account for the fact that the resident informants develop a rating and dating complex, while the non-resident informants do not. A first factor is that of the different definitions of college life held by the resident and non-resident informants. A second factor is the place of residence. Since the resident informants reside in the same dormitory, they can closely survey one another's behavior with respect to personal relations. The non-resident informants, in contrast, can not as easily observe nor influence behavior because most dates and friendships are off-campus.

To summarize: The student peer group at Creighton functions as a reference group in three areas of college life; academic work, student organization, and personal relations. The peer group can only function as a reference group in those aspects of academic work, student organizations, and personal relations upon which it can bring sanctions, positive or negative. Another dimension which determines whether the peer group functions as a reference group or not are the differing definitions of the purposes of college life held by resident and non-resident informants.

Student Subcultures

Student subcultures are one type of subculture that exists in American society. A majority of student subcultures serve to reinforce rather than undermine the dominant cultural patterns in America. The relationship between the college culture and student subcultures is a reciprocal one. Thus, student subcultures both determine the character of the college culture and are determined by it.

Several studies by social scientists (Becker et al., 1961; Hughes et al., 1962; and Sanford, 1962) suggest that student subcultures emerge on college campuses as collective responses to the college environment. This study notes that students employ different groups as points of reference in developing the subcultural ethos. The study further indicates that since different students identify with different reference groups, there is apt to be more than one variant of student subculture at Creighton University. The resident and non-resident informants did, in fact, develop two subcultural varieties. For example, the resident

informants develop norms regarding the frequency of dating and who is an acceptable date while the non-resident informants do not develop such norms.

There are several reasons for the emergence of two subcultural variations. First is the place of residence. As previously noted, when students reside in the same building, they can sanction certain aspects of behavior that otherwise can not be regulated through group norms.

Second, the two categories of informant--resident and non-resident--define college life differently. The different definitions of college life reflect the different values adhered to by resident and non-resident informants. The non-resident informants define college life as the taking of courses, studying for and passing them, and eventually attaining a degree. The non-resident informants, therefore, define college life in terms of academic work. In contrast, the resident informants define college life as being concerned with the area of academic work plus having an active social life. The resident informants' definition is, therefore, broader, since it includes the areas of student organizations and personal relations.

Third, the emergence of two variants of student subculture may be attributed to the different social worlds of the two categories of informants. Just as the resident and non-resident informants have different social worlds due largely to their places of residence, the place of residence explains, at least partly, the disparity between the resident and non-resident informants' definitions of college life.

The fact that two subcultural varieties exist on Creighton's campus does not imply that only these two exist on Creighton's campus. In fact,

there are probably many more student subcultures than the two described in this study.

Other Conclusions

There are several important observations and conclusions to be made from this study which are not directly related to the main issues with which the study was concerned. These observations arose as the investigator analyzed the impact of the college environment upon the development of student subcultures at Creighton. Specifically, four elements of the college environment have been examined: physical environment, classroom environment, administrative environment and peer environment. Of the four elements, the classroom environment and the peer environment have greater impact on student subculture.

Because the peer environment has already been discussed, the classroom environment will be reviewed. The classroom environment is important because it is in the classroom that most student-faculty interaction occurs. The aspects of the classroom environment which this study examined are: instructor's behavior, students' behavior, and modus operandi of the class.

The instructor's behavior includes teaching techniques, the types of assignment, and tolerance of questions from students. There is not consensus among the resident and non-resident informants regarding preferred teaching techniques. It was found that organizational preference is dependent upon two factors. They are personal need and previous classroom experiences. Some students learn more than othersthrough the implementation of a particular teaching technique. Thus, some of the

informants preferred team-teaching, while others preferred discussions with lecture. The exposure students have had to various teaching techniques influences their preferences. In other words, a student would not know whether she prefers team-teaching if she has never been exposed to that technique.

Students' behavior in the classroom is the second element in that environment. It has been observed that students' behavior in the classroom is a response, though not exclusively a collective one, to the instructor's behavior. Students react to the instructor's behavior in either active or passive ways. Active behavior incorporates conduct such as asking questions, taking notes, and attempting to clarify another student's questions. Passive behavior, in contrast, includes conversation with others, sleeping, writing letters, and doodling.

There are at least two factors which determine whether students' behavior in class is active or passive. These are class organization and instructor's presentation. The resident and non-resident informants tend to respond actively in classes employing lecture with discussion, discussion and team-teaching. The informants are more apt to be passive in the lecture situation, particularly if the class is a relatively large one. Characteristics of the instructor's presentation which tend to induce passive behavior are intolerance of questions, rapid delivery, and repetition of the text. The informants believe that instructors who do not tolerate questions feel threatened when questions are asked. Rapid delivery tends to induce passive behavior, because it makes the taking of notes difficult. Repetition of the text makes class boring and when bored the informants tend to doodle.

A final element in the classroom environment is the modus operandi, which includes such things as seating assignments, and the taking of roll. For the most part, the instructor's discretion determines the modus operandi of the class.

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Research

This study has certain strengths. First, because it is a case study, the researcher has been able to study peer groups and student subcultures at Creighton in detail and in depth. Second, the technique of participant observation has enabled the researcher to examine in detail that which appears to be trite or insignificant. The researcher, therefore, was able to explore all phenomena surrounding peer groups and student subcultures at Creighton in an effort to discover new meanings and relationships. Finally, by employing the technique of participant observation, it is concerned with similarities and differences in human behavior and with the predictable and the unpredictable aspects of human behavior. The study, therefore, aims primarily to understand rather than predict human behavior.

This study has contributed to knowledge to three social sciences, viz., sociology of education, complex organizations, and social psychology. The study has contributed to the area of sociology of education in two ways. First, this study has enhanced our knowledge of the degree to which various categories of student are committed to education by noting that differing definitions of college life result in varying commitments to education. Second, it has augmented our understanding of the ways in

which peer reference groups influence attitudes held by college students, since it notes the impact that peer groups have upon the emergence of student subcultures. The study has contributed to the area of complex organizations by enhancing our understanding of how students view the faculty and higher education. By indicting the extent to which the peer group influences college students, the study has contributed to the area of social psychology.

All social science studies, whether qualitative or quantitative, inevitably have certain weaknesses. Any weaknesses of this study may be attributed to the use of the technique of participant observation and its exploratory nature. The researcher, as a participant observer, perhaps altered the social situation by her presence. A second problem is that of generalization. In other words: Are the informants representative of other students and peer groups at Creighton? Are Creighton students typical of American college students in general? Do student peer groups at other colleges function as reference groups in the same manner as they do at Creighton? Do other colleges and universities embody multiple student subcultures? Only further research and comparative study can answer these questions.

Implications

Most studies in social science should raise questions which will lead to further research and should note the practical implications of the conclusions. There are several implications of this study which could well be of interest to the faculty at Creighton in particular and faculty members in general.

First, an awareness that students respond collectively to the college environment can aid faculty in understanding and dealing with students. A realization that students from different social worlds define college life differently should also help faculty in dealing with students. Thus, instructors may come to understand that if students emphasize the academic aspect of college, it will be easier to get them involved in the world of ideas.

Second, the knowledge that students generally perceive straight lecture as the least effective teaching method and that this method induces passive behavior from students should encourage instructors to use a variety of techniques and to be innovative whenever possible.

Finally, instructors may wish to refrain from rapid speech and being too repetitious since this type of behavior leads to passive student behavior. The findings of this study might encourage instructors to be more open in the classroom and more tolerant of questions from students.

Just as every social science study should note the practical implications of its conclusions, it should attempt to verify, at least some aspect, of the theory or theories it draws on for its conceptual scheme. It is by employing the conceptual scheme of a particular theory, such as reference group, in the empirical world that concepts are refined and clarified.

This study has drawn upon two concepts--reference group and subculture--for its conceptual scheme, and it has implications for both reference group and subculture theories. First, the study enhances our knowledge of the factors that influence the formation of peer groups on

a college campus. Three factors in this regard have been noted: pre-college acquaintanceship, propinquity, and similarity of attitudes and values. Second, this study notes the circumstances in which the peer group functions as a reference group. Specifically, the peer group functions as a reference group only in the areas of college life that it can sanction.

This study has also drawn on the concept of the subculture. First, it has been noted that peer groups influence the emergence of student subcultures on a college campus. Second, it cited the conditions under which subculture and its variants arise. Furthermore, it noted the difference between two subcultural variations. Thus, it has been brought to the readers attention that resident informants develop norms regarding personal relations and participation in student organizations while the non-resident informants do not. In other words, this study has augmented existing knowledge of subcultures by clarifying the factors that give rise to student subcultures.

The accumulation of knowledge of human behavior is a slow and tedious process. Every social science study contributes in some way to the fact-index of human behavior. The contribution of this study has been to enhance our knowledge of student life at institutions of higher learning.

The writer believes that what is needed now is more exploratory studies of student life at various colleges. It is only in this way we will discover the various factors which influence the emergence of student subcultures.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

NAME:

RESIDENT OR NON-RESIDENT STUDENT

AGE:

1) Why did you select your major?

2) Approximately how many hours do you study per week?

3) How often do you cut classes per week?

4) How do you finance your tuition?

5) Are you involved in any student organizations, such as town council, student board of governors, sororities?

6) What interests, activities or hobbies do you have outside of the University?

7) How many scholarly books have you read since September that were not assigned?

   List:

8) Have you ever talked to a faculty member outside of class? If so, how often?

   What was the nature of these discussions?

9) What are the disciplinary consequences of misconduct or violating University regulations.

   How frequent is this action?

   Is it more frequent than in the past?

10) What types of class organization do you prefer? (lecture, lecture with discussion, discussion, seminars, team-teaching)

    Why?

    What type of class organization do you believe is the least effective?

    Why?

APPENDIX B

INFORMANTS

Ann is 20-years-old. She is a non-resident student majoring in psychology because she wants to understand and help people.

Ann is an only child.

Ann is financing her tuition in several ways. First, she has an Ak-Sar-Ben scholarship. She also participates in the work-study program at Creighton and has a loan. Her parents contribute only the essentials for survival, such as food, and shelter.

She plays intramural baseball.

Ann is interested in music and some forms of art. She is also interested in politics and has read several politically related books.

Bridgette is 20-years-old. She is a non-resident student majoring in elementary education with a minor in special education. Bridgette transferred to the University of Nebraska at Omaha at the beginning of her sophomore year for economic reasons.

Bridgette is from a large family of ten children. She is the third oldest. Her father is a doctor. It is because of the size of his family that her father cannot finance her education.

Bridgette works approximately 24 hours per week. Her parents help with expenses when necessary and possible.

She is not active in any student organizations because she does not have the time due to the fact that she works. She has considered joining a sorority.

Bridgette's main interest outside of school is sports.

Eileen is 19-years-old. She is a non-resident student considering drama as a possible major. She is considering drama because she likes to act. Eileen was observed only during the 1973 spring semester.

Eileen is an only child.

Her grandfather is financing her education. Eileen does not work during the academic year.

She is not active in any student organizations.

Her interests are acting and sports.

Meg is 20-years-old. She is a non-resident student majoring in elementary education. She has selected elementary education as her major, because she enjoys working with children. Meg was observed during the second phase of the study.

Meg is the second of four children.

Meg's education is financed by her parents. Meg tutors several third and fourth-grade children.

Meg is not active in student organizations, since she spends several hours per week tutoring.

Her interests are sewing, reading and tennis.

Jan is 20-years-old. She is a non-resident student and is majoring in psychology. She has selected psychology as her major, because she is interested in understanding people. Jan is considering going to graduate school and becoming a career woman.

Jan is the younger of two children.

Her parents are the principal means by which her tuition is financed. She works approximately 9-14 hours per week.

Jan is not involved in any student organizations.

Jan's outside interests include sports activities, particularly horseback riding.

Mary Margaret is a 20-year-old non-resident student. She was undecided about her major during her freshman year. She considered a major in either theology or sociology. Mary Margaret did not return to Creighton in the spring of 1973, because she could not decide what she wanted to do.

Her tuition is financed through a family scholarship. In other words, Mary Margaret attends school free, as her father is a full-time faculty member in the school of medicine.

Mary Margaret is not involved in any student organizations.

Her only outside hobby or interest is sewing.

Martha is 20-years-old. She is a non-resident student. She is majoring in psychology, because she plans to work with retarded children and she thinks that psychology is the best preparation for this. Martha plans to go to graduate school.

Martha is third in a family of five children.

Her tuition is financed by means of a family scholarship, since her father is a faculty member in the school of medicine.

She assisted with freshmen orientation in the fall of 1972.

Besides working with children, Martha likes any type of art activity. Martha herself does painting and metal art.

Mary Alice - is 19-years-old. She is a non-resident student. She is majoring in elementary education with a minor in English. Mary Alice is going into elementary education, because she has always wanted to be a teacher.

She is the oldest of five children.

Her tuition is completely financed by her father although Mary Alice works 26 hours in a laundry.

Mary Alice is not active in any student organizations. Presently, she is considering joining a sorority.

Mary Alice's interests and hobbies are tennis, horseback riding, swimming and baseball.

Pam is 20-years-old. She is a non-resident student who is majoring in psychology. Pam has selected her major, because she thinks psychology is an interesting area to study.

Pam's education is financed by a family scholarship, as her father is a full-time faculty member in the school of medicine. Even though Pam is on a scholarship, she works 16 hours a week at a drug store.

Pam is an active member in a sorority. She also worked on the freshmen orientation in the fall of 1972.

Pam enjoys sports, particularly water skiing and swimming.

Sandy is 19-years-old. She is a non-resident student who is majoring in English with a minor in secondary education. Sandy chose her major because she likes English and people. Sandy was observed only during the 1973 spring semester.

Sandy is the youngest of five children. All her siblings attended Creighton.

Her tuition is completely financed by her parents. Sandy does not have a job.

She does not belong to any student organizations, because she is not interested in them.

Sandy's interests include tennis, swimming and bicycling.

Dede is 20-years-old. She is a resident student. Dede is from Omaha, but because of transportation problems lives in the dormitory.

She is the oldest of four children.

Dede is a member of a sorority.

Her outside activities and hobbies are ice skating and snow skiing.

Judy is 20-years-old. She is a resident student. She is from Des Moines, Iowa. Judy is a pre-pharmacy major. She chose her major, because she thinks that the health field is the best field.

Judy is the older of two children. There is a great deal of sibling rivalry between her and her brother.

Judy's tuition is financed partially through an academic scholarship. Her parents pay the remaining amount.

She is active in a local sorority and a professional sorority.

She was active in the 1972 presidential election. Judy's entire family is active in politics.

Irene is 19-years-old. She is a resident student from Des Moines, Iowa. Irene is only one of several freshmen who reside in Kiewit Hall because of lack of space in Delgman Hall. She was observed during the second phase of the study.

She is the oldest of five children.

Her education is financed by her aunt.

Irene belongs to a sorority.

Her hobbies and interests are ceramics, needlepoint, and antiquing.

Kay is 20-years-old. She is a resident student from Wahoo, Nebraska. Kay is majoring in history, with a minor in secondary education, because history has always fascinated her. Kay was observed only during the second phase of the study.

Kay is the older of two children.

Kay's tuition is financed by her parents. She works only during the summer months.

She is a member of a sorority.

Her interests and hobbies include tennis and ceramics.

Liz is 19-years-old. She is a resident student from Kansas City, Kansas. She was one of several freshmen who had to live in Kiewit Hall because of the lack of space in Delgman Hall.

She is an only child.

Liz's parents pay her tuition.

She is a member of a local sorority.

Liz is active in all participant sports and is an avid hockey fan.

Nancy is 19-years-old. She is a resident student from Chicago, Illinois. Nancy is a pre-pharmacy major. She has selected her major for two reasons. First, she enjoys science and math. Second, she is aware of the amount of money she can make after she is a licensed pharmacist.

She is the younger of two children.

Her tuition is financed by her parents. She pays for the extras with the money she saves from working during the summer.

Nancy is active in one of the professional sororities.

Nancy enjoys art work such as needlepoint and crewel work.

Rosemary is 20-years-old. She is a resident student from Publeo, Colorado. Rosemary did not return to Creighton after her freshman year because of increased tuition costs.

Rosemary's tuition was financed by her parents. She works only during the summer.

She was not involved in any student organization during her freshman year.

Her activities and hobbies are tennis and playing the guitar.

Rosey is 20-years-old. She is a resident student from Iowa. She is considering majoring in elementary education. Rosey did not return to Creighton in the spring of 1973, because she was getting married.

She is the oldest of three children.

Her tuition is financed by her parents.

Rosey is active in a sorority.

Her interests and hobbies include antiquing and embroidering.

Sue is 20-years-old. She is a resident student from Chicago, Illinois. Sue is majoring in Spanish with a minor in secondary education. Sue was observed during the spring of 1973, since she transferred to Creighton at the beginning of her sophomore year.

She is the older of two children.

Sue's tuition is financed partly by her parents. Sue works part-time to pay the other half of her tuition.

She is a member of a local sorority.

Sue's hobbies and interests include sports and sewing.

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